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REISSUE PATENT APPLICATION TRANSMITTAL

Address to:

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Box Patent Application
Washington, DC 20231

Attorney Docket No.	9203/046 RE
First Named Inventor	William J. Veeneman
Original Patent Number	5,774,874
Original Patent Issue Date (Month/Day/Year)	June 30, 1998
Express Mail Label No.	EL591297562US

APPLICATION FOR REISSUE OF:

(check applicable box)



Utility Patent



Design Patent



Plant Patent

APPLICATION ELEMENTS

- ☒ * Fee Transmittal Form (PTO/SB/56)
(Submit an original, and a duplicate for fee processing)
- ☒ Specification and Claims (amended, if appropriate)
- ☒ Drawing(s) (proposed amendments, if appropriate)
- ☐ Reissue Oath / Declaration (original or copy)
(37 C.F.R. § 1.175)(PTO/SB/51 or 52)
- Original U.S. Patent
☐ Offer to Surrender Original Patent (37 C.F.R. § 1.178)
(PTO/SB/53 or PTO/SB/54)
or
☐ Ribboned Original Patent Grant
☐ Affidavit / Declaration of Loss (PTO/SB/55)
- Original U.S. Patent currently assigned?
☒ Yes ☐ No
(If Yes, check applicable box(es))
☐ Written Consent of all Assignees (PTO/SB/53 or 54)
☐ 37 C.F.R. § 3.73(b) Statement ☒ Power of Attorney

ACCOMPANYING APPLICATION PARTS

- ☐ Foreign Priority Claim (35 U.S.C. 119)
(if applicable)
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement (IDS)/PTO-1449 ☐ Copies of IDS Citations
- ☐ English Translation of Reissue Oath/Declaration
(if applicable)
- * Small Entity ☐ Statement filed in prior application,
Statement(s) Status still proper and desired
(PTO/SB/09-12)
- ☒ Preliminary Amendment
- ☒ Return Receipt Postcard (MPEP 503)
(Should be specifically itemized)
- ☐ Other:

* NOTE FOR ITEMS 1 & 10 IN ORDER TO BE ENTITLED TO PAY
SMALL ENTITY FEES, A SMALL ENTITY STATEMENT IS REQUIRED
(37 C.F.R. § 1.27), EXCEPT IF ONE FILED IN A PRIOR APPLICATION
IS RELIED UPON (37 C.F.R. § 1.28).

14. CORRESPONDENCE ADDRESS

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REISSUE APPLICATION FEE TRANSMITTAL FORM

Docket Number (Optional)

9203/046 RE

Claims as Filed - Part 1

Claims in Patent	For	Number Filed in Reissue Application	(3) Number Extra	Small Entity		Other than a Small Entity	
				Rate	Fee	Rate	Fee
(A) 14	Total Claims (37 CFR 1.16(j))	(B) 29	**** 9 =	x \$	=	or	x \$ 18 = 162
(C) 3	Independent Claims (37 CFR 1.16(i))	(D) 6	* 3 =	x \$	=		x \$ 78 = 234
Basic Fee (37 CFR 1.16(h))				\$			\$ 690
Total Filing Fee				\$		OR	\$ 1,086

Claims as Amended - Part 2

	(1) Claims Remaining After Amendment		(2) Highest Number Previously Paid For	(3) Extra Claims Present	Small Entity		Other than a Small Entity	
					Rate	Fee	Rate	Fee
Total Claims (37 CFR 1.16(j))	***	MINUS	**	*	x \$	=	or	x \$ =
Independent Claims (37 CFR 1.16(i))	***	MINUS	*****	=	x \$	=		x \$ =
Total Additional Fee					\$		OR	\$

* If the entry in (D) is less than the entry in (C), Write "0" in column 3.

** If the "Highest Number of Total Claims Previously Paid For" is less than 20, Write "20" in this space.

*** After any cancellation of claims

**** If "A" is greater than 20, use (B - A); if "A" is 20 or less, use (B - 20).

***** "Highest Number of Independent Claims Previously Paid For" or Number of Independent Claims in Patent (C).

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☒ The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees under 37 CFR 1.16 or 1.17 which may be required, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 04-1697 .
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30 JUNE 2000
Date

James M. Graziano
Signature of Applicant, Attorney or Agent of Record

James M. Graziano
Typed or printed name

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re application of: Veeneman, William J.; Thomas, Barbara; and Remington, Debra

Patent No.: 5,774,874

Group No.: Unknown

Filed: 06/30/1998

Examiner: Unknown

For: MULTI-MERCHANT GIFT REGISTRY

Box REISSUE

Assistant Commissioner for Patents

Washington, D.C. 20231

EXPRESS MAIL CERTIFICATE

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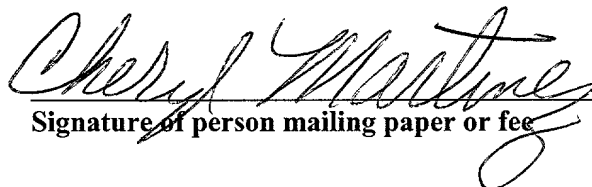
Date of Deposit 06/30/2000

I hereby state that the following *attached* paper or fee

1. Reissue Patent Application Transmittal (1 page)
2. Reissue Application Fee Transmittal Form (1 page)
3. Specification/Patent No. 5,774,874 (18 pages)
4. Formal Drawings (20 sheets)
5. Preliminary Amendment (12 pages)
6. Appointment of Co-Counsel (1 page)
7. Check No. 2713 in the amount of \$1,086.00
8. Return receipt postcard

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Cheryl Martinez


Signature of person mailing paper or fee

09610158-063000

2010-2011		2011-2012		2012-2013		2013-2014		2014-2015		2015-2016		2016-2017		2017-2018		2018-2019		2019-2020		2020-2021		2021-2022		2022-2023		2023-2024		2024-2025		2025-2026		2026-2027		2027-2028		2028-2029		2029-2030		2030-2031		2031-2032		2032-2033		2033-2034		2034-2035		2035-2036		2036-2037		2037-2038		2038-2039		2039-2040		2040-2041		2041-2042		2042-2043		2043-2044		2044-2045		2045-2046		2046-2047		2047-2048		2048-2049		2049-2050		2050-2051		2051-2052		2052-2053		2053-2054		2054-2055		2055-2056		2056-2057		2057-2058		2058-2059		2059-2060		2060-2061		2061-2062		2062-2063		2063-2064		2064-2065		2065-2066		2066-2067		2067-2068		2068-2069		2069-2070		2070-2071		2071-2072		2072-2073		2073-2074		2074-2075		2075-2076		2076-2077		2077-2078		2078-2079		2079-2080		2080-2081		2081-2082		2082-2083		2083-2084		2084-2085		2085-2086		2086-2087		2087-2088		2088-2089		2089-2090		2090-2091		2091-2092		2092-2093		2093-2094		2094-2095		2095-2096		2096-2097		2097-2098		2098-2099		2099-2100		2100-2101		2101-2102		2102-2103		2103-2104		2104-2105		2105-2106		2106-2107		2107-2108		2108-2109		2109-2110		2110-2111		2111-2112		2112-2113		2113-2114		2114-2115		2115-2116		2116-2117		2117-2118		2118-2119		2119-2120		2120-2121		2121-2122		2122-2123		2123-2124		2124-2125		2125-2126		2126-2127		2127-2128		2128-2129		2129-2130		2130-2131		2131-2132		2132-2133		2133-2134		2134-2135		2135-2136		2136-2137		2137-2138		2138-2139		2139-2140		2140-2141		2141-2142		2142-2143		2143-2144		2144-2145		2145-2146		2146-2147		2147-2148		2148-2149		2149-2150		2150-2151		2151-2152		2152-2153		2153-2154		2154-2155		2155-2156		2156-2157		2157-2158		2158-2159		2159-2160		2160-2161		2161-2162		2162-2163		2163-2164		2164-2165		2165-2166		2166-2167		2167-2168		2168-2169		2169-2170		2170-2171		2171-2172		2172-2173		2173-2174		2174-2175		2175-2176		2176-2177		2177-2178		2178-2179		2179-2180		2180-2181		2181-2182		2182-2183		2183-2184		2184-2185		2185-2186		2186-2187		2187-2188		2188-2189		2189-2190		2190-2191		2191-2192		2192-2193		2193-2194		2194-2195		2195-2196		2196-2197		2197-2198		2198-2199		2199-2200		2200-2201		2201-2202		2202-2203		2203-2204		2204-2205		2205-2206		2206-2207		2207-2208		2208-2209		2209-2210		2210-2211		2211-2212		2212-2213		2213-2214		2214-2215		2215-2216		2216-2217		2217-2218		2218-2219		2219-2220		2220-2221		2221-2222		2222-2223		2223-2224		2224-2225		2225-2226		2226-2227		2227-2228		2228-2229		2229-2230		2230-2231		2231-2232		2232-2233		2233-2234		2234-2235		2235-2236		2236-2237	
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jc854 U.S. PTO
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Date _____

APPOINTMENT OF CO-COUNSEL

The undersigned hereby appoints as co-counsel for such transactions:

Respectfully submitted,

Patterson, Thuente & Skaar, P.A.
4800 IDS Center
80 South 8th Street
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402
Telephone: 612/349-5747

[illegible]

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Date 6/30/00

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

In connection with the above-referenced patent reissue application, filed herewith, please consider the following claims and remarks:

1. (Amended) A multi-merchant gift registry system [comprising:
a gift registry kiosk disposed proximate] for enabling a registrant to input gift
information into a gift registry that is maintained for the stores of a plurality of merchants
[in a shopping area, each of said merchants participating in the gift registry], the gift
registry [kiosk having;] system comprising:
at least one data terminal comprising:

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the first information for each registrant including at least [one name for] the [registrant] registrant's name;

a second data entry system capable of receiving second information, the second information including a list of potential gifts which the registrant has identified and a unique identifier associated with the particular merchant having each of the desired gifts;

a database storage system that stores and retrieves the first and second information about the registrant and the unique identifier associated with the particular merchant having each of the desired gifts; and

a display system that displays the list of potential gifts for a particular registrant and information about the particular merchants the desired gifts are from, including the unique identifier associated with the particular merchant having each of the desired gifts, in response to an inquiry from a prospective purchaser.

2. The gift registry as in claim 1 wherein the first data entry system is a touch screen system.

3. The gift registry as in claim 1 wherein the second data entry system comprises a transfer device electrically connected to the computer system and a portable device.

4. The gift registry as in claim 3 wherein the portable device is a hand held scanning device.

5. The gift registry as in claim 4 wherein the transfer device is a docking station for the portable hand held scanning device.

6. The gift registry as in claim 1 wherein the second data entry system identifies each participating merchant by a unique identifier.

7. The gift registry as in claim 6 wherein the unique identifier is in the form of a digitally encoded value embodied in a bar code.

8. The gift registry as in claim 1 further comprising updating means for updating the database storage system as a prospective purchaser buys a gift from the list of potential gifts for a particular registrant.

9. (Amended) A system for registering items selected by a registrant from a plurality of participating merchants for subsequent communication to a prospective purchaser, the system comprising:

a gift registry [kiosk disposed proximate the stores of a plurality of merchants in a shopping area, each of said merchants participating in the gift registry, the gift registry kiosk having a] computer system containing identifying information about a registrant, the information for each registrant including at least [one name for the registrant] the registrant's name and a list of potential gifts which the registrant has identified;

a portable input and storage device for use by the registrant with a plurality of participating merchants, the input and storage device being capable of receiving and storing information regarding the registrant's desired gifts including the merchant each desired gift is from, wherein the input and storage device stores a unique identifier for the particular merchant each desired gift is from;

a transfer device connected to the gift registry computer system that receives the information regarding the registrant's desired gifts from the portable input and storage device and transfers the information to the gift registry computer system; and

a prospective purchaser interface device that allows a prospective purchaser to view a list of the goods desired by the registrant wherein the list includes information about the particular merchant each gift is from.

10. The gift registry as in claim 9 wherein the portable device is a hand held scanning device .

11. The gift registry as in claim 9 wherein the unique identifier is in the form of a digitally encoded value embodied in a bar code.

12. The gift registry as in claim 9 further comprising updating means for updating the database storage system as a prospective purchaser buys a gift from the list of potential gifts for a particular registrant.

13. A method of operating a gift registry system capable of registering items selected by a registrant from a plurality of participating merchants in a shopping area as possible gifts for the registrant for subsequent communication to a prospective purchaser for possible purchase as gifts for the registrant, the system having a computer system, a portable input and storage device, a transfer device and a prospective purchaser interface device, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving identifying information about a registrant at the computer system;
using the portable input and storage device to select desired gifts from a plurality of participating merchants;

using the portable input and storage device to enter a unique identifier for each participating merchant, such that each gift chosen by the registrant will be identified as being from a certain merchant;

transferring the information received and stored by the portable input and storage device into the computer system via the transfer device; and interfacing with a prospective purchaser such that the prospective purchaser can view a list of the gifts desired by the registrant and the particular merchants the gifts are from.

14. The method as in claim 13 further including the step of updating the information stored in the computer system to reflect gifts that have been purchased for a particular registrant.

✓ 15. A multi-merchant gift registry system for registering items, that are selected by a registrant from items available from a plurality of merchants, as possible gifts for the

registrant, the multi-merchant gift registry system comprising:

first data entry means through which first information, including at least a registrant name, are entered into said gift registry system;

second data entry means capable of receiving second information, including data identifying potential gifts which said registrant has selected and a unique merchant identifier associated with each of said potential gifts;

database storage means for storing and retrieving said first information and said second information; and

display means for displaying registrant gift data, that identifies at least one of said potential gifts for a particular registrant and the particular merchant associated with said at least one of said potential gifts, in response to an inquiry from a prospective purchaser.

16. The multi-merchant gift registry system of claim 15 wherein said second data entry means comprises:

bar code scanner means for reading bar code data imprinted on said potential gifts.

17. The multi-merchant gift registry system of claim 16 further comprising: data transfer means for transmitting said second information read by said bar code scanner to said database storage means.

18. The multi-merchant gift registry system of claim 17 wherein said data transfer means comprises:

modem means for establishing a communication connection via a communication medium to said database storage means.

19. The multi-merchant gift registry system of claim 17 wherein said data transfer means comprises:

wireless link means for transmitting said second information read by said bar

code scanner to said database storage means.

20. A multi-merchant gift registry system for registering items, that are selected by a registrant from items available from a plurality of merchants, as possible gifts for the registrant, the multi-merchant gift registry system comprising:

at least one registrant terminal device comprising:

first data entry means through which first information, including at least a registrant name, are entered into said gift registry system,

second data entry means capable of receiving second information, including data identifying potential gifts which said registrant has selected and a unique merchant identifier associated with each of said potential gifts;

server means in communication with said at least one registrant terminal device, comprising:

database storage means for storing and retrieving said first information and said second information, and

display means for displaying registrant gift data, that identifies at least one of said potential gifts for a particular registrant and the particular merchant associated with said at least one of said potential gifts, in response to an inquiry from a prospective purchaser.

21. The multi-merchant gift registry system of claim 20 wherein said second data entry means comprises:

bar code scanner means for reading bar code data imprinted on said potential gifts.

22. The multi-merchant gift registry system of claim 21 wherein said at least one registrant terminal device further comprises:

data transfer means for transmitting said second information read by said bar code scanner to said database storage means.

23. The multi-merchant gift registry system of claim 22 wherein said data transfer means comprises:

modem means for establishing a communication connection from said at least one registrant terminal device via a communication medium to said server means.

24. The multi-merchant gift registry system of claim 20 wherein said display means comprises:

means for transmitting said registrant gift data, that identifies at least one of said potential gifts for a particular registrant and the particular merchant associated with said at least one of said potential gifts, to a terminal device of a prospective purchaser in response to an inquiry from said prospective purchaser.

25. A method of operating a multi-merchant gift registry system for registering items, that are selected by a registrant from items available from a plurality of merchants, as possible gifts for the registrant, the multi-merchant gift registry system comprising at least one registrant terminal device for enabling a registrant to enter registrant gift data into said gift registry system and a server to receive and store said registrant gift data, said method of operating a multi-merchant gift registry system, comprising the steps of:

entering first data, including at least a registrant name, into said gift registry system via said registrant terminal device;

entering second data, including data identifying potential gifts which said registrant has selected and a unique merchant identifier associated with each of said potential gifts, into said gift registry system via said registrant terminal device;

storing and retrieving said first information and said second information in a database; and

displaying to a prospective purchaser registrant gift data, that identifies at least one of said potential gifts for a particular registrant and the particular merchant associated with said at least one of said potential gifts, in response to an inquiry from said prospective purchaser.

26. The method of operating a multi-merchant gift registry system of claim 25 wherein said step of entering second data comprises:

activating a bar code scanner to read bar code data imprinted on said potential gifts.

27. The method of operating a multi-merchant gift registry system of claim 26 further comprising:

transmitting said second information read by said bar code scanner to said database.

28. The method of operating a multi-merchant gift registry system of claim 26 wherein said step of transmitting comprises:

establishing a communication connection from said at least one registrant terminal device via a communication medium to said server.

29. The multi-merchant gift registry system of claim 25 wherein said step of displaying comprises:

transmitting said registrant gift data, that identifies at least one of said potential gifts for a particular registrant and the particular merchant associated with said at least one of said potential gifts, to a terminal device of a prospective purchaser in response to an inquiry from said prospective purchaser.

Remarks

The Patent Owner has filed this Reissue Patent Application to correct an error in the patent, which error was made without any deceptive intention and arises out of an error in the conduct of the prosecution of the patent application which became the patent. The error consists of language in independent claims 1 and 9 which resulted in the Patent Owner claiming less than he had a right to claim in the patent. Independent claims 1 and 9 are too narrow in scope due to the use of the limitation "kiosk" therein,

which limitation is absent from independent claim 13. By removing the "kiosk" limitation from independent claims 1, 9 and substituting the terminology "at least one data terminal" in claim 1 and "gift registry computer system" in claim 9, Patent Owner will maintain consistency in scope among all three independent claims 1, 9 and 13 contained in the patent. Patent Owner has also added claims 15-29, which are analogous in scope to amended claims 1, 9 and original claims 2-8,10-14, to thereby recite structure that encompasses the specific embodiment of Figure 3 which was disclosed in the patent but not specifically claimed in the patent.

This Reissue Patent Application is filed within two years from the date of the original patent and the required Declaration and Consent of Patent Owner documents will be filed after the filing of the Reissue Patent Application. The enclosed specification is a copy of the patent for which reissue is requested, submitted in the form of cut up soft copies of the issued patent, with only a single column of the printed patent securely mounted on a separate sheet of paper. The claims are the only elements of the original patent that have been amended. The reissue claims are for the same invention as disclosed as being the invention in the original patent, as required by 35 U.S.C. §251, where:

(A) the claims presented in the reissue application are described in the original patent specification and enabled by the original patent specification such that 35 U.S.C. §112 first paragraph is satisfied; and

(B) nothing in the original patent specification indicates an intent not to claim the subject matter of the claims presented in the reissue application.

In addition, the claims presented in the reissue application do not impermissibly recapture canceled subject matter, pursuant to the guidelines for impermissible recapture set forth by the Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit in *Clement*, 131 F.3d at 1468-69, 45 USPQ2d at 1164:

"The first step in applying the recapture rule is to determine whether and in what aspect the reissue claims are broader than the patent claims. ... The second step is to determine whether the broader aspects of the reissue claims relate to surrendered subject matter. To determine whether an applicant surrendered particular subject matter, we look to the prosecution history for arguments and changes to the claims made in an effort to overcome a prior art rejection."

In particular, the rule for impermissible recapture dictates that if the claim limitation now being omitted was originally presented to make the claims allowable over a rejection made in the original application, the omitted claim limitation relates to subject matter previously surrendered by the applicant, and impermissible recapture exists. In the original patent application, a single Office Action was issued on 20 June 1997, rejecting claims 1-14 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over the publication article titled "Here Comes the (New) Bridal Registry" which appeared in the Chain Store Age Executive, October 1992, as well as by Applicant's admitted prior art discussed their background of the invention. In response to the 20 June 1997 Office Action, Applicant filed an amendment on 12 September 1997 and amended the independent claims 1 and 9 (but not independent claim 13) to traverse the Examiner's rejection of claims 1-14, with claim 1 being illustrative of these amendments:

1. A multi-merchant gift registry comprising:
a gift registry kiosk disposed proximate the stores of a plurality of merchants in a shopping area, each of said merchants participating in the gift registry, the gift registry kiosk having:
 - a first data entry system through which first information and inquiries about registrants in the gift registry are entered into the computer system the first information for each registrant including at least one name for the registrant;
 - a second data entry system capable of receiving second information, the second information including a list of potential gifts which the registrant has identified and [information about] a unique identifier associated with the particular merchant[s] having each of the desired gifts;
 - a database storage system that stores and retrieves the first and second information about the registrant[s] and the unique identifier associated with the particular merchant having each of the desired gifts;
 - and
 - a display system that displays the list of potential gifts for a particular registrant and information about the particular merchants the desired gifts are from, including the unique identifier associated with the particular merchant having each of the desired gifts, in response to an inquiry from a prospective purchaser.

These amendments define the fact that each merchant is assigned a unique identifier and the gift selected by the registrant is tied to a particular merchant who offers the selected gift, via the use of this unique identifier. In addition, Applicant added the

limitation of a kiosk for use by the registrant to input the gift and merchant data. The arguments made by Applicant in the 12 September 1997 Amendment to present these amendments were:

"The claims as amended are drawn to a gift registry that serves a plurality of merchants each having a store in a shopping area. Neither Applicants' admitted prior art nor the publication article is drawn to a registry serving a plurality of merchants, each merchant having a store in a shopping area. In fact, the publication article inferentially teaches away from the registry serving a number of stores in a shopping area. The registry in the publication article serves a number of stores under common ownership in a chain of stores. Typically the individual stores making up the chain of stores are located distant from one another in order to attract customers from a number of spatially distant areas, as distinct from the present invention in which the registry serves a number of different stores in a shopping area."

Nothing in these arguments refer to a "kiosk" and the arguments are instead directed to the distinguishing factor of a gift registry system that serves many merchants, each having a unique identifier, where the gift information is correlated with the selected merchant via the unique merchant identifier. Therefore, the substitution of "at least one data terminal" for "kiosk" in independent claim 1 and "gift registry computer system" in claim 9 maintains the distinguishing characteristics of Applicant's invention over the cited references, which is the provision of a gift registry system for a plurality of merchants, with the registrant entering registrant gift data to indicate not only the identity of the selected gift but also the unique identity of the merchant who sells the selected gift. The more general terminology of "at least one data terminal" and "gift registry computer system" is supported by the disclosure of the embodiment of Figure 3 and the associated description in column 6 of the patent. Thus, the terminology "at least one data terminal" and "gift registry computer system" is more appropriate for use in independent claims 1 and 9 than the terminology "kiosk." In addition, the limitation "kiosk" is not addressed in Applicant's arguments in the 12 September 1997 Amendment or necessary to distinguish over the cited references as evidenced by the allowed independent claim 13 which does not contain such a limitation. Therefore, the amendments to independent claims 1 and 9 do not represent impermissible recapture of canceled subject matter.

In summary, Applicant has amended claims 1, 9 and has submitted new claims

15-29. No impermissible new matter is added to the Reissue Patent Application in this Amendment. Applicant believes that this Reissue Patent Application is in condition for allowance and invites the Examiner to telephone the undersigned at (303) 449-9497 (X13) if additional matters require attention to expedite the processing of this Reissue Patent Application to issuance.

Applicants authorize any additional fees to be charged to account # 04-1697.

Respectfully submitted,
DUFT, GRAZIANO & FOREST, P.C.

Date: 30 JUNE 2000

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Customer Number 024283

MULTI-MERCHANT GIFT REGISTRY

RELATED APPLICATIONS

This is a continuation-in-part of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 08/132,604, filed Oct. 6, 1993, entitled GIFT REGISTRY APPARATUS AND METHOD, abandoned, which itself was a continuation-in-part of application Ser. No. 08/062,470, filed May 14, 1993, abandoned. The present application is also related to Applicants' copending application entitled A METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR PROVIDING REGISTRY CARDS, filed on even date herewith and assigned to the assignee of the present invention, the disclosure of which is herein incorporated by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a gift registry system. In particular, the present invention relates to a multi-merchant gift registry system.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Bridal registries are commonly known. Traditionally, in the United States, when a couple decides to marry, they will often go to particular stores and choose certain items which they would like to receive as gifts at their wedding. The particular store registers the name of the couple and the gifts that they have selected. The register is often nothing more than a log book. In recent times the registry has become a computer database that is available for interaction by a touch screen.

The current practice is to have a bridal registry or baby registry in a single store. Multiple stores in a shopping mall may each have their own registries. This requires the registrants to go through the registration process at each store where they wish to register. Additionally, potential purchasers must follow the current practice of entering certain information regarding the registrant via the interactive touch screen at each store where the registrant is registered. This then requires the potential purchasers to have to wait in line to operate the registry and get printouts at each of the multiple stores.

Currently, it is only the larger stores that can afford to have the equipment to operate an automated self service gift registry system. Consequently, many smaller stores and vendors at which the bride and the groom or the parents of the child may wish to be registered are not able to have their own registry system. Additionally, potential purchasers may not like the store typically used for registries, or the potential purchasers may have coupons at other stores or have employee discounts at other stores. Finally, because other stores may have the same items that the registrants have registered for at a lower price than the store in which the registry is located, the registry at the first store often does not accurately reflect the gifts which have been purchased elsewhere.

While this kind of self-service gift registry system has met with tremendous acceptance in the marketplace, there is a continued need for a multi-merchant registry that allows registrants to register for goods from a multitude of merchants.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a system for registering items selected by a registrant from a plurality of participating merchants for subsequent communication to a prospective purchaser. The system has a computer system that

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contains identifying information about the registrant. A portable input and storage device is provided that can be carried by the registrant into a plurality of participating stores. The portable input and storage device is capable of receiving and storing information regarding gifts that the registrant desires to receive as presents. The input and storage device stores a unique identifier for the particular merchant each desired gift is from. A transfer device is provided connected to the computer system that receives the information regarding the registrant's desired gifts from the portable input and storage device and transfers the information to the computer system. Finally, a prospective purchaser interface device is provided that allows the prospective purchaser to view, sort or print a list of the gifts desired by the registrant and which particular merchant those gifts are from.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a block diagram representative of registry apparatus in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a block diagram representative of an alternate embodiment of registry apparatus in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 3 is a block diagram representative of a second alternate embodiment of registry apparatus in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 4 is a block diagram representative of a registry network system in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 5 is a flow chart representation of the steps taken by a registrant user of the registry apparatus in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 6 is a flow chart representation similar to FIG. 5 of an alternate embodiment of the steps which may be taken by a registrant user;

FIG. 7 is a flow chart representation of the steps taken by a purchaser user of the registry apparatus in accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 8 is a flow chart representation of an alternate embodiment of the steps which may be taken by a purchaser user;

FIG. 9 is an illustration of a representative printout for a purchaser user;

FIGS. 10A-G are a series of illustrations representing screen images that are displayed to a registrant user or a purchaser user;

FIG. 11 is a perspective view of a kiosk housing usable in accordance with the present invention; and

FIGS. 12A-B are a flow chart representation of steps taken by a registrant to obtain a portable bar code scanner from a housing like that shown in FIG. 11 and return it.

FIG. 13 is a top plan view of a shopping mall having a gift registry apparatus according to the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

A gift registry apparatus will be described below. The apparatus will be described with specific reference to a wedding gift registry but it should be understood that it is equally applicable to a baby gift registry or birthday gift registry. Additionally, like elements in the figures are correspondingly identified with primed numerals.

At this time a general overview description of the preferred embodiment of the present invention will be given. This will be followed by a background description of a gift

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registry apparatus, as described in Ser. No. 08/132,604, abandoned. The present invention will then be described in greater detail in light of the previous discussions.

OVERVIEW OF PRESENT INVENTION

The present invention is designed such that a registrant, or first user, may register for gifts from multiple merchants as opposed to the current practice of only registering in a single store. The present invention will be described with reference to an enclosed shopping mall, but it should be noted that the gift registry apparatus could be located in a kiosk adjacent a strip mall, in the side of a wall of one of the buildings of the strip mall, or in a kiosk in its own small protective shelter similar to some automatic teller machines, adjacent a downtown shopping area or other like area.

The present invention is illustrated schematically in FIG. 13. FIG. 13 is a top plan view of a shopping mall having a gift registry kiosk situated centrally in the mall. The gift registry system has a computer system that contains identifying information about the registrant. A portable input and storage device is provided that can be carried by the registrant into a plurality of participating stores. In the preferred embodiment of the present invention the portable input and storage device is a hand held scanning device. The portable input and storage device is capable of receiving and storing information regarding gifts that the registrant desires to receive as presents, as well as information necessary to identify the particular merchant which carries a desired gift.

The input and storage device stores a unique identifier for the particular merchant for each desired gift, as well as a unique identifier for the gift itself. The unique identifiers are preferably in the form of a bar code that is scanned in by the registrant for each merchant and each gift. A transfer device is provided connected to the computer system for receiving and transferring the information from the portable input and storage device regarding the registrant's desired gifts and the particular merchant those gifts are from. Finally, a prospective purchaser interface device is provided that allows the prospective purchaser to view a list of the gifts desired by the registrant and which particular merchant those gifts are from.

BACKGROUND DESCRIPTION OF A GIFT REGISTRY APPARATUS

A gift registry apparatus is designated generally by the numeral 20 in FIG. 1. Apparatus 20 is illustrated to include computer mechanism 22 and bar code scanning mechanism 24 for obtaining Universal Product Code (UPC) information about possible gift items. The UPC information allows the computer mechanism to categorize products or, in this case, potential gift items, so that a gift buyer can have the option of obtaining a list of gifts of a particular category.

The scanning mechanism 24 includes not only the bar code reading feature, but also a mechanism for transferring the information to computer mechanism 22. Bar code scanning mechanism 24 includes a bar code scanner 40 and may include a holder 44 with a locking mechanism 46 which unlocks only when a card reader 36 has appropriately read a magnetically encoded card, such as a credit card. Holder 44 may include a transfer device 45 which reads the memory of bar code scanning mechanism 24 for communication to a computer 26. The various electrical connections and locking/unlocking mechanism for use with the bar code scanning mechanism are conventional.

It is noted that scanning mechanism 24 is a key feature of an arrangement which may also include a card reader 36

which functions as a key to unlock scanning mechanism 24 as discussed in more detail hereinafter. Such arrangement allows the registrant (also called the first user) to browse among possible gift items to identify a group of the items which are desired as gifts. After registration is completed by a registrant, although a potential gift purchaser may not personally use the scanning mechanism 24 as a part of the arrangement which allows the potential gift purchaser to browse among the group of items selected by the registrant to identify a particular one of the group for purchase, it is likely that a store clerk will scan bar codes or otherwise obtain necessary information for transfer to computer mechanism 22 regarding items purchased.

Computer mechanism 22 includes a printer 34 and computer 26, as well as an interface mechanism 28 which comprises a monitor 30 and a touch screen 32. Computer mechanism 22 also includes software (not shown). Computer 26 preferably has a modem 37 for communication with a central processing mechanism as described more fully with respect to FIG. 4. Alternatively, modem 37 could connect to a network or to a mainframe. A keyboard port 38 is available on computer 26 to provide various servicing functions.

The software includes a first mechanism for receiving the first information about the registrant user and a second mechanism for receiving the second information about possible gift items. The software also includes a mechanism for associating the first and second information. In addition, the software includes a mechanism for obtaining the first and second information which has been associated together.

Computer mechanism 22 and bar code scanning mechanism 24 in conjunction with the software preferably further include a mechanism for verifying by the registrant that the items on which information has been entered are those desired by the registrant as a result of being able to review at least some of the information obtained from scanning the bar codes. The verifying mechanism includes a display mechanism 212 (see FIG. 11) which is a part of or mounted on the bar code scanner 40.

A kiosk representative of a housing 200 appropriate for containing the various mechanisms is depicted in FIG. 11. The computer terminal mechanism is not visible, but is contained within the housing. Monitor 30 with touch screen 32 is located approximately 3½ feet above the ground at an incline approximately perpendicular to the line of sight of a 5'8" person's eyes. An access opening 202 for card reader 36 (not shown) is provided. Bar code scanner 40 is held on a transfer device 45 in a compartment 204 having a sliding door 206. Preferably a sensor (not shown) would sense when bar code scanner 40 is physically present on the transfer device 45. Preferably, there would also be sensors (not shown) which would sense when door 206 is open and when door 206 is closed. The sensors would provide triggering signals with respect to screens appearing on the monitor to instruct the user. Appropriate sensors and sensing circuits are known by those skilled in the art.

Kiosk 200 is also useful for dispensing gift certificates. When functioning to dispense a gift certificate, the certificate is dispensed at opening 208. Likewise, printouts requested as part of the gift registry are also dispensed from opening 208. Thus, with the two functions possible using the same housing 200, it is possible to provide a reward in the form of a gift certificate to the gift registry registrant as an acknowledgement for using the apparatus. The gift certificate function is more fully explained in U.S. Pat. No. 5,243,174, herein incorporated by reference. Bar code scanner 40 is portable and preferably, although not required,

includes a keyboard 210 and an LCD screen 212. The keyboard can be used to enter the identification number or an equivalent UPC number of a bar code which does not scan. The keyboard can also be used to enter purchase information after a purchaser makes a purchase. As indicated, the LCD screen is available for immediate verification that the correct bar code was scanned with respect to the item desired. An acceptable portable bar code scanner for this apparatus is Symbol Model LDT 3805. The particularly novel characteristic of apparatus 200 is that it allows the gift registry system to be a complete self-service system up to the point of purchase of a gift by the second user or gift buyer.

With respect to the gift registrant taking the portable bar code scanner to browse the store, a preferred form of security is that the registrant would provide a credit card to opening 202 to be read. Credit on the credit card account would be checked and a predetermined sum, for example \$200, would be debited to the account before releasing the scanner. When the account was verified, credit found to be available, and the debit made, door 206 would either automatically open or, at least, would unlock and a prompt would appear on the monitor for the registrant to open the door and take the scanner. When door 206 was sensed to be open, another prompt could appear on the monitor for the registrant to take the bar code scanner 40. When it was sensed that the bar code scanner was no longer present, door 206 would automatically close and lock or the registrant would be prompted to close the door. After the registrant had completed use of the scanner 40, either an appropriate indication would be made on a menu at monitor 30 or the credit card could once again be inserted and read, whereupon appropriate menus would instruct the registrant to open door 206 and place scanner 40 properly on the charging stand and transfer device 45. The physical presence of scanner 40 would be sensed. An appropriate communication would be made between the terminal computer or the central processing computer and the scanner to verify that it was placed properly. Door 206 would then automatically close or a prompt would be given for the registrant to close the door. When the door was sensed to be closed, the credit card account would be credited an equal amount as the earlier debit, and the registrant would be informed of such action and thanked for registering gifts in the registry.

Alternatively, the portable bar code scanner is in the possession of the retail store. In this case, when a registrant wishes to register gifts in the registry apparatus, a store clerk requires, for example, cash, a credit card, driver's license, or something equivalent as security for giving the bar code scanner to the registrant user.

After the user has initiated apparatus 20 by entering first information on themselves in the computer, they walk around the store with the bar code scanner. Second information obtained from the bar codes scanned on the desired items, is communicated to the computer. In this regard, as shown in FIG. 2, bar code scanner 40' with memory/storage preferably includes a transmitter 52 which through radio, infrared, or other electromagnetic frequencies sends encoded information to receiver 54 for downloading to computer 26'. Other elements of apparatus 20' are similar to those of apparatus 20, for example, printer 34', monitor 30' and touch screen 32'. Alternatively, the communication mechanism could be removable storage media 42, for example, a commonly known floppy disk, which could be removed from the scanner and inserted in retrieving mechanism 48 in the computer, such as the usual floppy disk receiving slot and related mechanism.

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in the central processing computer 66. Regardless of where the association occurs, the associated information is stored in the memory or available storage of central processing computer 66. In that way, any one of computing mechanisms 20.N can be accessed by a second user in order to obtain the associated first and second information as desired.

It is noted that network 58 can also access a credit card authorization computer 70 in a known fashion through public telephone channels 64. This may be desirable to validate particular registrants, and as indicated, is useful in debiting an account as security for the bar code scanner with a subsequent credit when the scanner is returned.

Flow charts depicting a registrant user's use of the gift registry apparatus are shown in FIGS. 5 and 6. With reference to FIG. 5, the registrant approaches the gift registry apparatus and as indicated at box 72, the registrants enter first information about themselves. The gift registry apparatus as indicated at box 74 receives the first information and provides either on the monitor or by printout a unique identification number and a password for the particular registrant. Alternatively, the registrant could be given an option of providing a password. The identification number enables association of first and second information. The password is needed so that the information contained in the registry apparatus which is relevant to the particular registrant can only be modified by someone who knows the password. Accumulated information can be accessed by any potential gift giver who simply knows the name of the registrant.

As indicated at box 76, the registrant obtains the identification number and password and requests the bar code scanner. In the presently discussed embodiment, the store retains control of the bar code scanner, so that as indicated at box 78, it is the store which provides the bar code scanner to the registrant upon request. As indicated at box 80, the registrant then scans the identification number in the form of a unique bar code and walks about the store scanning bar codes of desired gift items to obtain second information. Alternatively, the identification number could be provided to the bar code scanner by the computer through the transfer device or could be manually entered at the scanner keyboard. When the registrant has completed scanning the bar codes of all the items which they may wish to receive as gifts, as indicated at box 82, the registrant returns the scanner to a store clerk. The store clerk, as indicated at box 84, places the scanner in the transfer device so that the second information can be downloaded to the computer. As indicated at box 86, the gift registry apparatus receives the second information and, as indicated at box 88, it associates the first and second information together. As indicated at box 89, the gift registry apparatus can be on-line to databases which include UPC data and current prices.

The flow charts of FIGS. 12A and 12B depict an alternative to the store providing the bar code scanner to the registrant (see also FIG. 11). Just as indicated at box 72 in FIG. 5, the first step, as indicated at box 214 is for the registrant to enter first information about themselves. As indicated at box 216, the first information is received by apparatus 20 and a prompt given for the registrant to supply a credit card or other appropriate unlocking mechanism. At box 218, the registrant passes the magnetic card through the card reader. At box 220, the account represented in the information read from the card is validated and, assuming that there is credit available, a hold is placed against a predetermined amount of credit as security for the bar code reader. In the preferred embodiment, as indicated at box 222, the unique identification number is transmitted to the bar

code scanner. Then, at box 224, the door 206 is unlocked and registrant is prompted to open it. As indicated at box 226, the registrant opens the door. At box 228, apparatus 20 senses that the door is open and prompts registrant to take the scanner. As indicated at box 230, registrant takes the scanner, closes the door according to instructions, and acknowledges that the scanner has been taken. At box 232, the door is locked. At box 234, it is indicated that the registrant is then free to browse among possible gift items and scan bar codes for second information. The flow chart of FIG. 12A, as described, corresponds with the flow chart of FIG. 5 inclusive of boxes 72-80.

The flow chart depicted in FIG. 12B relates to the registrant returning the bar code scanner and having a credit placed against the debit which was earlier posted to the credit card account. As indicated at box 236, registrant first identifies or registers a desire to return the scanner. At box 238, the door 206 of compartment 204 is unlocked and the registrant is prompted to open the door and return scanner. Depending on the construction of housing 200, door 206 may automatically open and close as appropriate or there may be prompts for the registrant to physically open and close the door. At box 240, registrant replaces the scanner. At box 242, replacement of the scanner is sensed and apparatus 20 makes a communication with the scanner to insure that it has been properly placed for recharging and downloading of second information. The door is either automatically closed or a prompt is given to the registrant to close the door. At box 244, the hold that was placed against the credit card account is removed. At box 246, the registrant is thanked and monitor 30 reverts to the welcome screen. At box 248, apparatus 20 downloads the second information from the scanner to the appropriate computer for association with other accumulated information regarding that registrant. The flow chart of FIG. 12B corresponds with the inclusive boxes of 82-86 in FIG. 5. The subsequent portion of FIG. 5 is still appropriate. In that regard, rather than the monitor reverting to the welcome screen, it may allow the registrant to review the accumulated information for any changes. Based on the indicated method of FIGS. 12A and 12B, the computer terminal is programmed appropriately and present screens such as those shown in FIGS. 10F and 10G.

The procedure discussed thus far is sufficient for a useful gift registry system. With references to FIGS. 7 and 8, a gift buyer could now approach the system and obtain desired information as indicated in the flow charts of FIGS. 7 and 8. Nevertheless, there are further advantageous steps available. It is desirable, as indicated at box 90 of FIG. 5, that the registrant reviews the associated first and second information for correctness. If there is incorrect information or if the registrant wishes to delete certain information or enter new information, the apparatus may be again accessed by using the identification number and password and making appropriate changes. After the review and any changes have been made, the gift registry apparatus receives an indication from the registrant that the review has been made and completed. As indicated at box 92, it is then possible to optionally reward the registrant for taking the time and trouble to provide all this information to the gift registry apparatus of a particular store. The apparatus can be made capable to provide the reward to the registrant in the form of a store gift certificate, which may be pre-printed, or credit for a more general gift certificate selection as disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 5,243,174. As indicated at box 94, the registrant receives the gift certificate and can thereafter redeem it in a usual fashion.

As with the procedure of FIG. 5, as indicated at box 90', it is also desirable to have the registrant review the associated first and second information, and perhaps price information. As indicated at box 92', the gift registry apparatus receives the review indication and prints or otherwise dispenses a gift certificate. As indicated at box 94', the registrant receives the gift certificate. In a somewhat different procedure than indicated with respect to FIG. 5, as indicated at box 106, the registrant could after receiving the gift certificate provide any changes to the first and second information so that as indicated at box 108, the gift registry apparatus would at that time receive the changes.

The procedure for using the gift registry apparatus which is followed by potential gift buyers is shown in FIGS. 7 and 8. With reference to FIG. 7, a gift buyer first approaches the gift registry apparatus, and as indicated at box 110, identifies the registrant. Identifying the registrant may be done using encoded registry cards, as disclosed in Applicant's co-pending application entitled "A Method and Apparatus for Providing Registry Cards", the disclosure of which has been incorporated herein by reference, or through a touch screen menu system as described above. There can be further verification steps, such as also identifying the wedding date or the future spouse's name. As indicated at box 112, the gift registry apparatus provides access to the gift buyer so that the gift buyer can obtain associated first and

second information. As indicated at box 114, the gift buyer is given various menu options from which to select information for printing. As indicated at box 116, when an appropriate option has been selected, the gift registry apparatus prints the selected information. As indicated at box 118, the potential gift buyer receives the printout, walks the store and selects desired gifts, and then checks the gifts purchased on the printout or has the store clerk identify the gifts purchased so that, as indicated at box 120, the store clerk can update information in the gift registry apparatus. The update may be done at a terminal located in the store accessible to the clerk or could be located at a remote site wherein someone receiving the appropriate gift purchase information could do the update. In any case, as indicated at box 122, the gift registry apparatus receives the updated information and associates it with the first and second information.

A representative printout as referenced at box 118 is shown in FIG. 9. The printout indicates the names of the people getting married and their wedding date or other information such as the parents name and/or date of birth and/or the baby's name for baby showers. It further indicates the registrant identification number, which is the same as the number discussed hereinbefore. Then, the printout 119 preferably includes several columns, such as, the number of the particular gifts "wanted" and "received". The printout as shown also includes the item number of the particular gift as assigned by the gift registry apparatus relative to all the rest of the desired gifts by the registrant. In the example shown, the item number is eighteen. Then, preferably, there is a column providing a space wherein the gift buyer or the store clerk would indicate with a check mark or with a number, the fact of purchase or the number of items of that particular gift purchased by the gift buyer. There is preferably a description column and also a UPC number column. In any case, by using a printout of this general type, a physical record of items purchased can be maintained until someone can update the information in the gift registry apparatus to show that the particular gift has been purchased.

An alternative procedure is shown in FIG. 8. The gift buyer identified the registrant at box 110'. The gift registry apparatus, as shown at box 112' provides access to the gift buyer in order that the gift buyer can obtain associated first and second information. As shown at box 114', the gift buyer selects appropriate information for printing. As shown at box 116', the selected information is printed. As shown at box 124, the gift buyer receives the printout, selects desired gifts, and he/she or a store clerk uses a bar code scanner to scan bar codes of items purchased to obtain third information. In this regard, in an advanced system, the store clerk could use the same bar code scanning mechanism that is used in checking items at the purchase counter for payment. For example, there may be a code to enter or a button to touch which would initiate a software routine allowing receipt of the third information simultaneous with other use of the information with respect to check-out. The third information would be transferred as appropriate to the central computer of apparatus 20. To provide appropriate information, the identification number would be scanned or entered. Then the third information including the bar code or other identifying information of the item and the quantity of the particular item purchased is entered. Depending on the programming, the third information is then appropriately communicated and by using the identification number is associated with other accumulate information. As indicated at box 130, the gift registry apparatus receives the third information and, as indicated at box 132, the third information is associated with the first and second information.

Alternatively, the third information can be transmitted by radio frequency as discussed hereinbefore directly from the bar code scanner to the computer terminal and immediately associated with the first and second information. Such procedure is indicated by the solid arrow 134 extending from box 124 to box 130.

Gift registry apparatus 20 is programmed as known to those skilled in the art based on the representative screens of FIGS. 10A-G. Particular branch computers 60 (see FIG. 4) use a DOS operating system, are programmed with C++ program language, and make use of dBase database or SQL files for data storage. The central processing computer 66 uses an OS/2 operating system.

With reference to FIGS. 10A-G, as indicated at box 136, the first screen of the program welcomes a user to the "XYZ Gift Registry". The user is given the option of accessing the "registry" or proceeding with "registration". The instruction is given to touch one of the regions indicated.

Most screens include an option for the user to request "help" and will not be further discussed.

If the user touches "registration", then the screen represented by box 138 appears. The registrant user is given the opportunity to select between the options of "new registration", "update previous registration", "release bar code scanner", or "return bar code scanner".

Beginning with box 138, most screens in addition include the option of touching a region entitled "previous screen", which if touched, would result in the previous screen appearing so that the user could then proceed in accordance with the previous screen. Since this option is also available on most screens except the final processing and thank-you screens, it also will not be any further discussed.

If "new registration" is touched, control proceeds to screen 140. Screen 140 provides the registrant user the option of providing information relating to "wedding date", "bride's name", or "groom's name". If the bride's name or the groom's name is selected, control proceeds to the screen represented by box 142. It is understood that box 142 is representative with respect to different screens for the groom and for the bride as appropriate. In any case, the registrant user now has the option to provide information relating to name, address, city, state, zip code, day time phone and evening phone. When all the information has been provided, there is the additional option of touching the region identified by the word "done". In that way, control can proceed after all information is entered back to box 140. Depending on the item of information to be provided, control proceeds from box 142 to box 144 so that the appropriate information can be entered. The information to be entered is identified in the space marked "variable". As information is entered by depressing either numbers or letters, the appropriate information appears following the colon after the variable information. There may also be space and erase or backspace options. When all the information for the particular variable has been entered, the registrant user touches "done" and control returns to box 142. After the bride's name and the groom's name information has been entered or if the wedding date option is selected, control proceeds as indicated by a bubble "B" to box 146 shown in FIG. 10B. Again, the registrant user is presented with options for providing information, such as, wedding date, location, city, state, shower date number 1, and shower date number 2. Depending on the option selected, control either proceeds to box 148 or to box 144 as indicated by bubble "C". If control proceeds to box 144, then on the touching of "done", control will return to box 146. Assuming control proceeds to box 148,

the variable "wedding month" is indicated and the option of the various 12 months is provided. When one of the months is touched, the month will appear following the colon. There is an option to touch "month not determined". After one of the months or the month not known option is touched, control proceeds to the screen represented by box 150. Alternatively, there is also the option to touch "done" whereupon, control returns to box 146. At the screen represented by box 150, the registrant user is shown the variable "wedding date" and is provided the option of touching dates ranging from one to the total number of days in the particular month of the wedding month previously selected. If a date has not yet been determined, that option is also provided. There is further the option to touch "done" whereupon control returns to box 146. If a date is provided or if the date not determined is touched, control proceeds to the screen represented by box 152. Box 152 displays the variable "wedding year" and the registrant user is given the option of selecting from among various years. After a year has been touched, control returns to box 146 as indicated by bubble "B". Additional information can be provided until all appropriate information is provided for box 146. At that point, the registrant user touches "done" and control will go to a screen (not shown) which thanks the registrant user for providing the information and can give as many instructions as are deemed desirable in order to teach the registrant user what to do next in completing the procedures of FIGS. 5 or 6.

If the registrant at the screen represented by box 138 touches "update previous registration", then control proceeds as shown by bubble "E" to the screen represented by box 172 in FIG. 10E. Screen 172 requests the registrant's number and password and provides appropriate regions in which to touch letters or numbers until the entire registrant number and password is shown following the colon. At that point, the registrant touches "done" and, if the number and password are correct, control proceeds to the screen represented by box 174. If either is incorrect, a screen could appear which tells the user that the number or password is incorrect and that the user will be given another chance to enter them. At that point, screen 172 would reappear. If the incorrect number or password were entered again, control would revert to the welcome screen of box 136.

The screen represented by box 174 provides a series of options which identify items of information requiring correction. The registrant touches one of the items, and control proceeds to an appropriate screen such as might be found in FIGS. 10A or 10B. If the option selected is a "gift listing", then control would proceed to a screen like that of box 176. After all items requiring correction have been corrected, the registrant touches "done" and a screen thanking the registrant could appear before control reverts to the welcome screen of box 136. Additionally, there could be an intermediate screen which not only thanked the registrant, but explained that a gift certificate was being presented to them for completing the registration task. While the screen was available for viewing, the gift certificate could be printed or otherwise dispensed. Alternatively, a credit could be registered, and the registrant could be given a capability of accessing a gift certificate dispensing routine of the type disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 5,243,174.

At box 176, the registrant is given the option to "delete gift" or "change quantity of gift". Regardless of which option is selected, control proceeds to the screen of box 178 where the appropriate gift number is entered. On completion of entry, "done" is touched. If the option was to delete the gift, control would then revert to box 174. If the option was to change quantity of gift, then control proceeds to the

screen represented by box 180. At box 180, a new quantity for the gift is entered. Thereafter, "done" is touched and control reverts to box 174.

As indicated, after all information requiring correction has been corrected, "done" is touched at box 174 and control either immediately reverts to the welcome box 136 or does so after providing a gift certificate as discussed, depending on the option of the system.

If the user who approaches the gift registry apparatus touches "registry" on the first screen as represented by box 136, control proceeds as indicated at bubble "A" to box 154. The potential gift user is given the option to touch "bride's name" or "groom's name". Control then moves to screen 156 or alternatively to screen 158. The screen represented by box 156 provides the option of touching the date of the wedding. In addition, options to scroll to earlier or later dates is also provided. When a date has been touched, control proceeds to box 158 where the bride's or groom's last name is requested and an alphabet is provided so that letters can be touched and the name typed. When the name is completed, the user touches "done" and control proceeds to the screen represented by box 160. Since the last name has been provided in 158, box 160 provides a series of names in the registry which are identical to or similar to the name provided by the user. The user then has the ability to see the first name and perhaps a middle initial. The user can then more positively identify the name of the person who is presumably known to the user. The screen also provides the capability to scroll up or down so that more names can be viewed. After a name has been touched, control proceeds to the screen represented by box 162. Box 162 allows the user to confirm the wedding of interest by touching "yes" or "no". The box shows the name of the bride, the name of the groom, and the date of the wedding. If "no" is touched, control reverts to box 154. If "yes" is touched, control proceeds as indicated by a bubble "D" to box 164 shown in FIG. 10D. The screen represented by box 164 gives the potential gift giver user the option to select from among various classifications of gifts or all registered gifts or gifts having a certain price maximum or range or some other similar option. The screen also provides the option to scroll up or down to view more options. When a particular option has been touched, control proceeds to the screen represented by box 166. Box 166 shows the gift items desired by the registrant for the particular category selected. The screen preferably includes the number of a particular gift wanted and also the number already purchased. In that way, the potential gift giver can more knowledgeably select an appropriate gift. The screen also provides the ability to scroll up or down. The screen provides the user the option to touch "print registry" or "print page". If the print registry option is selected, all gifts in the registry for the particular registrant are printed. If the option to print the page is selected, then all gifts which can be accessed by scrolling up or down on that particular screen are printed. If the user does not want to print, the option "help" can be touched. A "help" routine is not provided herein, but could easily include the option to terminate use of the registry so that control would revert to the welcome screen represented by box 136. Assuming a print option is selected, control proceeds to a screen represented by box 168. Box 168 simply indicates the amount of time still needed to complete the printing job. Screen 168 requires no action on the part of the user, but rather is informational to the user. After the time has expired so that the printing is completed, control proceeds to the screen represented by box 170. Box 170 thanks the user and instructs her/him to take the printed gift list, use it and return

it to a cashier when a purchase is made. Screen 170 remains visible for a predetermined time and then control reverts to the welcome screen represented by box 136.

In a case when a registrant has the capability of taking the bar code scanner from a kiosk housing, the registrant is greeted as indicated by the welcome screen 136. The registrant presses registration and screen 138 appears. If it is a new registration, the new registration portion of screen 138 is pressed and the various screens relating to registering as earlier described appear. Similarly, a registrant can update a previous registration. Of interest at the moment, is the self-service feature which allows the registrant to take the portable bar code scanner. With this in mind, the registrant presses "release bar code scanner". As indicated by the circle "F", the next screen is represented at box 250 in FIG. 10F. Screen 250 prompts the registrant to insert a credit card. It indicates that a debit will be placed against the credit card account as security for the scanner, but that a credit will be given when the scanner is returned. After that is done, at box 252, a screen is indicated to instruct the registrant to open the door and remove the scanner. At box 254, the registrant is instructed to closed the door and touch a key to acknowledge. At box 256, the monitor can provide whatever instructions are appropriate. The present screen simply indicates to the registrant that she/he/they are now free to scan bar codes of items which they wish to receive as gifts. They are given the further instruction on how to return the scanner and receive credit. As indicated with the circle "A", control then reverts to the welcome screen 136.

When the registrant is ready to return the scanner, the "registration" portion of welcome screen 136 is again touched. At screen 138, "return bar code scanner" is touched. Control then reverts as indicated at circle "G" to the representative screen shown in FIG. 10G. At box 258, the registrant is instructed to insert a credit card. The further instruction is given to use the same card as was used when the scanner was earlier taken so that the proper account can be credited for the scanner return. At box 260, the registrant is instructed to open the door and replace the scanner. After apparatus 20 senses that the scanner has been properly replaced, the registrant at box 262 is instructed to close the door. When the door is sensed to have been closed, at box 264, the registrant is told that the credit card account has been credited and is thanked for using the gift registry. Control then again reverts to the welcome screen.

It is understood that the various screens presented are representative and that more or less information may be provided. It is further understood that fewer or more options may be made available to the user in accordance with the previously disclosed procedures to provide the full capability contemplated by the system.

FURTHER DESCRIPTION OF THE PRESENT INVENTION

The present invention is illustrated schematically in FIG. 13. FIG. 13 is a top plan view of a shopping mall having a gift registry kiosk 200 situated centrally. The gift registry kiosk 200 is of the type previously described with reference to FIGS. 1-12. Accordingly, the same figures and element numbers will be used for the description of the present invention. In the preferred embodiment of the present invention, the specific components used are commercially available and are known to those skilled in the art. Examples of the specific components have been previously identified above. In addition to the description of the specific components previously described, other alternative arrangements

of a gift registry kiosk 200 are also contemplated by the present invention. For example, instead of using the UPC code to identify desired gifts, any encoding scheme for entering a value representative of a particular item of merchandise could be used. In the case of the locking mechanism, it is possible to trigger the locking mechanism by the computer system instead of by a bar code swipe. It is also possible, for example, to accept in addition to credit cards, debit cards or even cash and then issue refund check to cover the deposit amount for checking out the scanner.

Each of the merchants which are participating in the gift registry system are identified by a reference number, as illustrated in FIG. 13. Preferably these merchants would identify themselves with identification signs in the windows of their stores, if they have stores, and also by identification signs on the kiosk 200 itself. Identification signs for each merchant may be placed, for instance, in signage area 301, as illustrated in FIG. 11.

The present invention will be described with particular reference to stores as opposed to merchants. The term store is used for ease of understanding the invention and for making the written text easier to read. It is understood that the present invention is equally applicable to vendors who do not have a "store". For instance, there are often times many merchants who have small booths, stands or kiosks in a shopping mall that are not actually stores, with four walls as people have come to use the term. Additionally, participating merchants may be only available through catalogs, as will be described below. These other merchants are understood to be included when the term store is used.

Bar code scanner 40, as previously described, is portable. This allows the registrant to carry scanner 40 from store to store. As the registrant enters a participating store, scanner 40 identifies which particular store the registrant is in by a unique store identifier code. This may be done by scanning in a bar code that is on the doorway of each participating store with scanner 40, it may be done by manually entering a code number for each store via key board 210 or it may be done remotely. For instance, each scanner may have a small receiver (not shown) inside it. As a registrant enters each participating store they typically walk through a security system. This security system may be set up to transmit an identifying signal each time someone walks through the door. This identifying signal may be received by the receiver in scanner 40 and recorded. By recording a unique store identifier, the gift registry system will know which gifts come from which store.

Once the registrant has scanned in each gift that is desired from the participating stores, scanning device 40 is placed back in transfer device 45 which reads the memory of bar code scanning mechanism 24 for communication to computer 26. It would also be possible to have a transfer device in each store, such that when a registrant was about to leave a store, they would insert the scanner into transfer device 45 and download the gifts selected from that store. This information would then be remotely transmitted to the computer in kiosk 200. From this point on, the gift registry system operates the same as previously described, with the exception that when the information is printed out for a prospective purchaser, the particular store that each gift is located in will be printed out.

As previously stated with respect to the gift registry apparatus described above, bar code scanner 40 could be located in a registrant's home such that the registrant could register for items from multiple merchants via a catalogue that includes bar codes for the items. The registrant would

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communicate to the kiosk via remote communication, such as a modem or the InterNet. The term catalog should be understood to be not limited to a physical paper catalog, but also encompasses things such as CD-ROMs, and other data storage devices. In this embodiment, it would be required that there be a unique bar code for each catalog to identify the supplier of the particular item. This identifying code could be on the front cover, the back cover, or somewhere within the catalog.

In an alternative embodiment of the present invention, each particular merchant would assist in updating the information in computer 26 such that the computer keeps an accurate list of desired gifts for each particular registrant. This may be done in a number of ways. In one embodiment, the merchant would be in remote communication with the computer of kiosk 200 via modem 37. As the prospective purchaser buys a gift, the merchant would request the list of gifts generated by the gift registry system from the prospective purchaser. This list of gifts would have on it a bar code that represents a unique identification code for the particular registrant. The merchant would then scan in the identification code, and then scan in the goods being purchased. The list of goods for this particular registrant would then be updated accordingly in computer 26.

In another embodiment, similar to that just discussed, a merchant would simply ask for the gift list from the prospective purchaser as the merchant is ringing up the sale. The merchant would then manually mark which items and how many items were purchased on the list. At the end of the day, all of the merchants associated with the multi-merchant registry would deposit them with a system operator or in a slot 302 as seen in FIG. 11. The system operator would then update the lists of desired gifts for the registrants. It should be noted that these are only two examples of how computer 26 may be updated and many other methods of updating computer 26 may be utilized without departing from the spirit or scope of the present invention.

It is understood that equivalents are possible within the spirit of the present invention and that changes made from the present disclosure, to the full extent extended by the general meaning of the terms in which the appended claims are expressed, are understood to be within the principle of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A multi-merchant gift registry comprising:

a gift registry kiosk disposed proximate the stores of a plurality of merchants in a shopping area, each of said merchants participating in the gift registry, the gift registry kiosk having;

a first data entry system through which first information and inquiries about registrants in the gift registry are entered into the computer system, the first information for each registrant including at least one name for the registrant;

a second data entry system capable of receiving second information, the second information including a list of potential gifts which the registrant has identified and a unique identifier associated with the particular merchant having each of the desired gifts;

a database storage system that stores and retrieves the first and second information about the registrant and the unique identifier associated with the particular merchant having each of the desired gifts; and

a display system that displays the list of potential gifts for a particular registrant and information about the particular merchants the desired gifts are from, including

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a transfer device connected to the computer system that receives the information regarding the registrant's desired gifts from the portable input and storage device; and transfers the information to the computer system; and

a prospective purchaser interface device that allows a prospective purchaser to view a list of the goods desired by the registrant wherein the list includes information about the particular merchant each gift is from.

10. The gift registry as in claim 9 wherein the portable device is a hand held scanning device.

11. The gift registry as in claim 9 wherein the unique identifier is in the form of a digitally encoded value embodied in a bar code.

12. The gift registry as in claim 9 further comprising updating means for updating the database storage system as a prospective purchaser buys a gift from the list of potential gifts for a particular registrant.

13. A method of operating a gift registry system capable of registering items selected by a registrant from a plurality of participating merchants in a shopping area as possible gifts for the registrant for subsequent communication to a prospective purchaser for possible purchase as gifts for the registrant, the system having a computer system, a portable input and storage device, a transfer device and a prospective purchaser interface device, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving identifying information about a registrant at the computer system;

using the portable input and storage device to select desired gifts from a plurality of participating merchants;

using the portable input and storage device to enter a unique identifier for each participating merchant, such that each gift chosen by the registrant will be identified as being from a certain merchant;

transferring the information received and stored by the portable input and storage device into the computer system via the transfer device; and

interfacing with a prospective purchaser such that the prospective purchaser can view a list of the gifts desired by the registrant and the particular merchants the gifts are from.

14. The method as in claim 13 further including the step of updating the information stored in the computer system to reflect gifts that have been purchased for a particular registrant.

* * * * *

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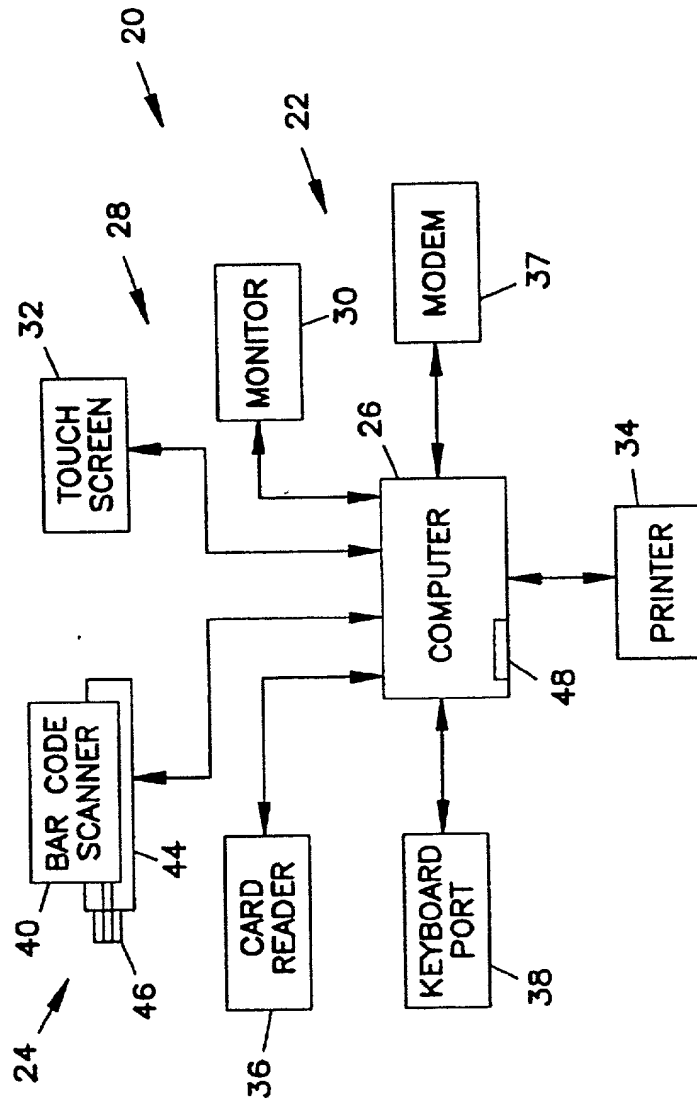


FIG. 1

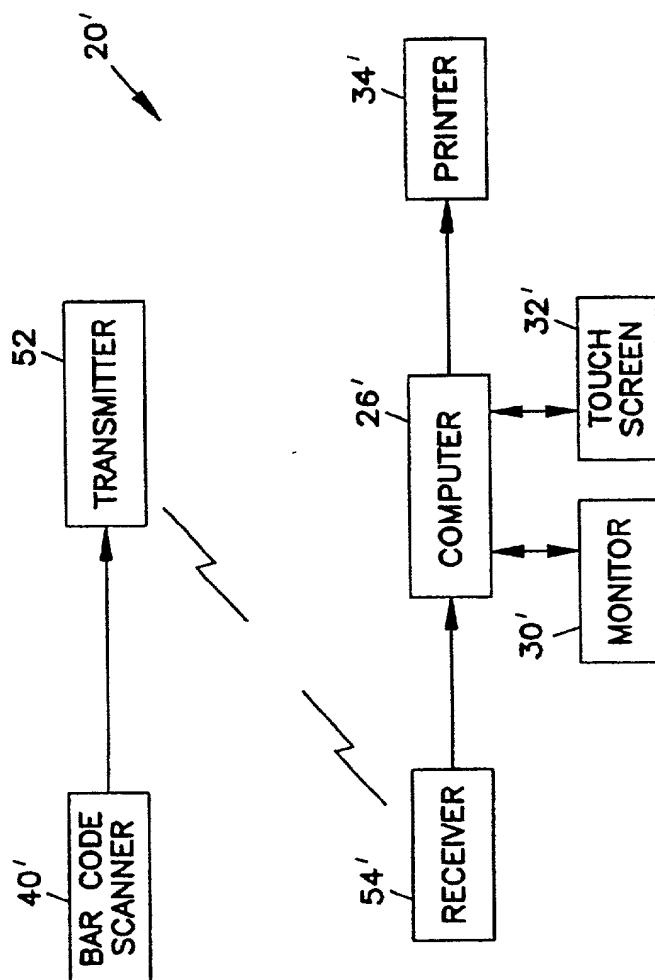


FIG. 2

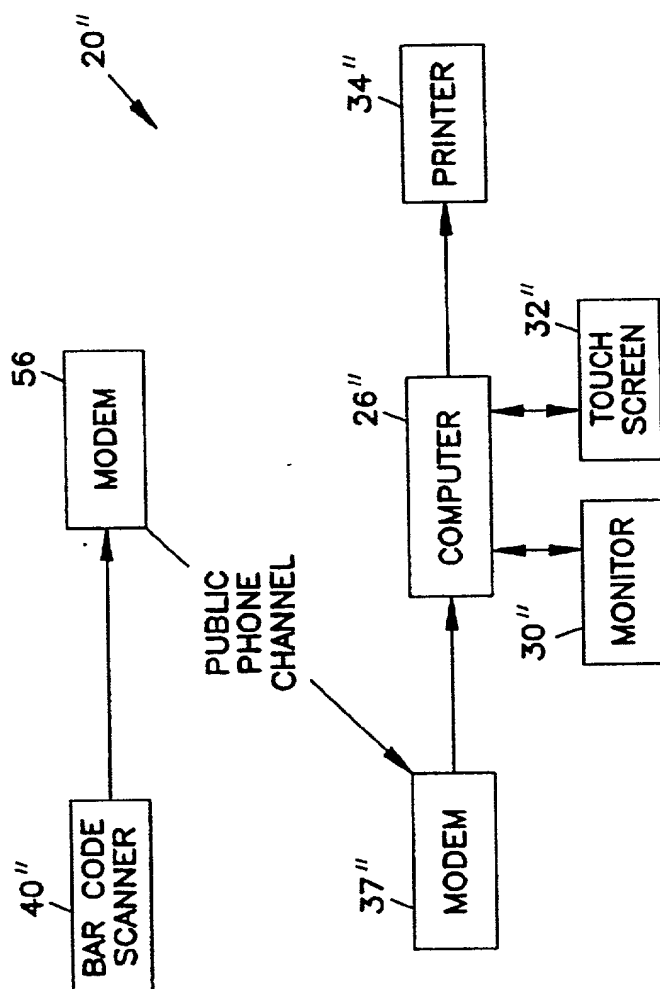


FIG. 3

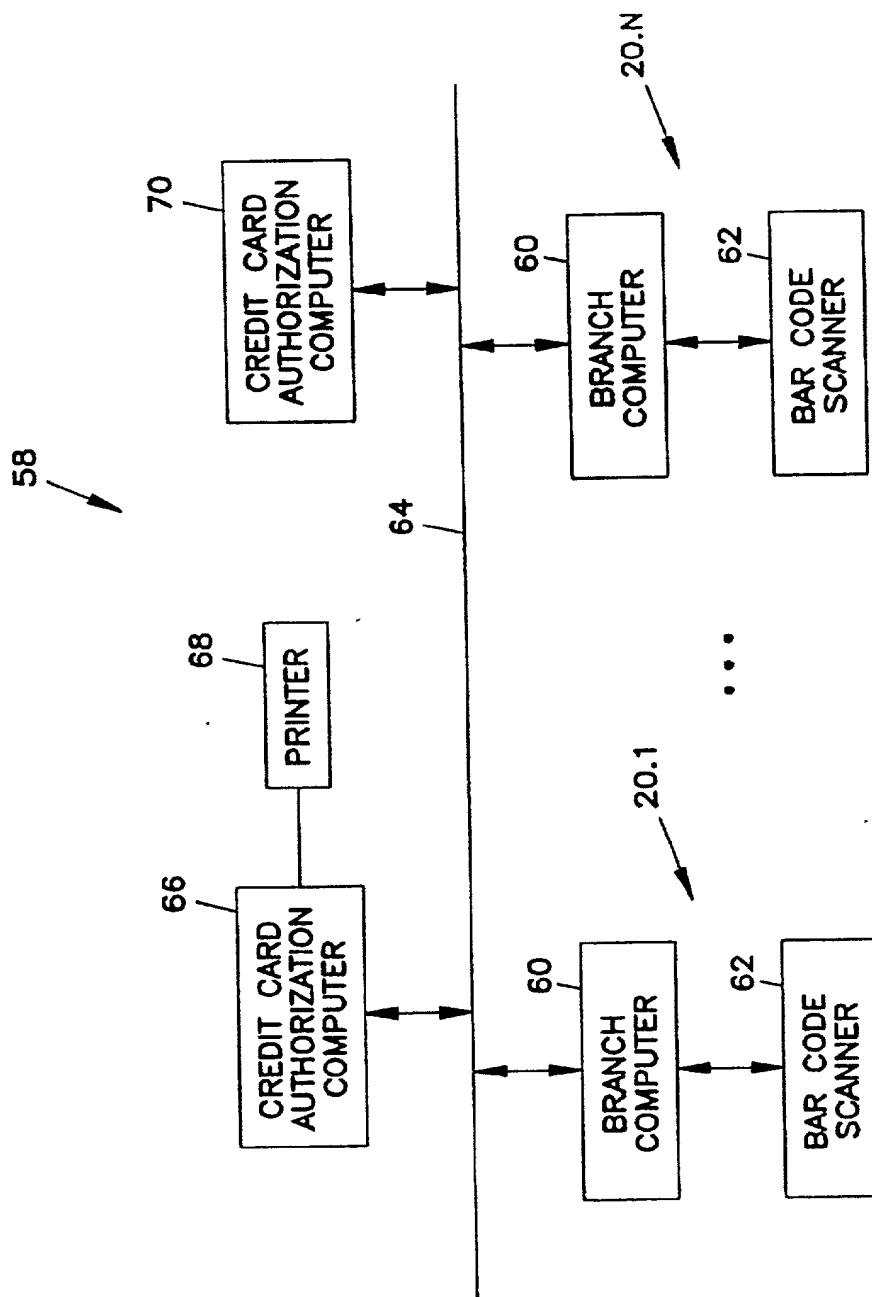


FIG. 4

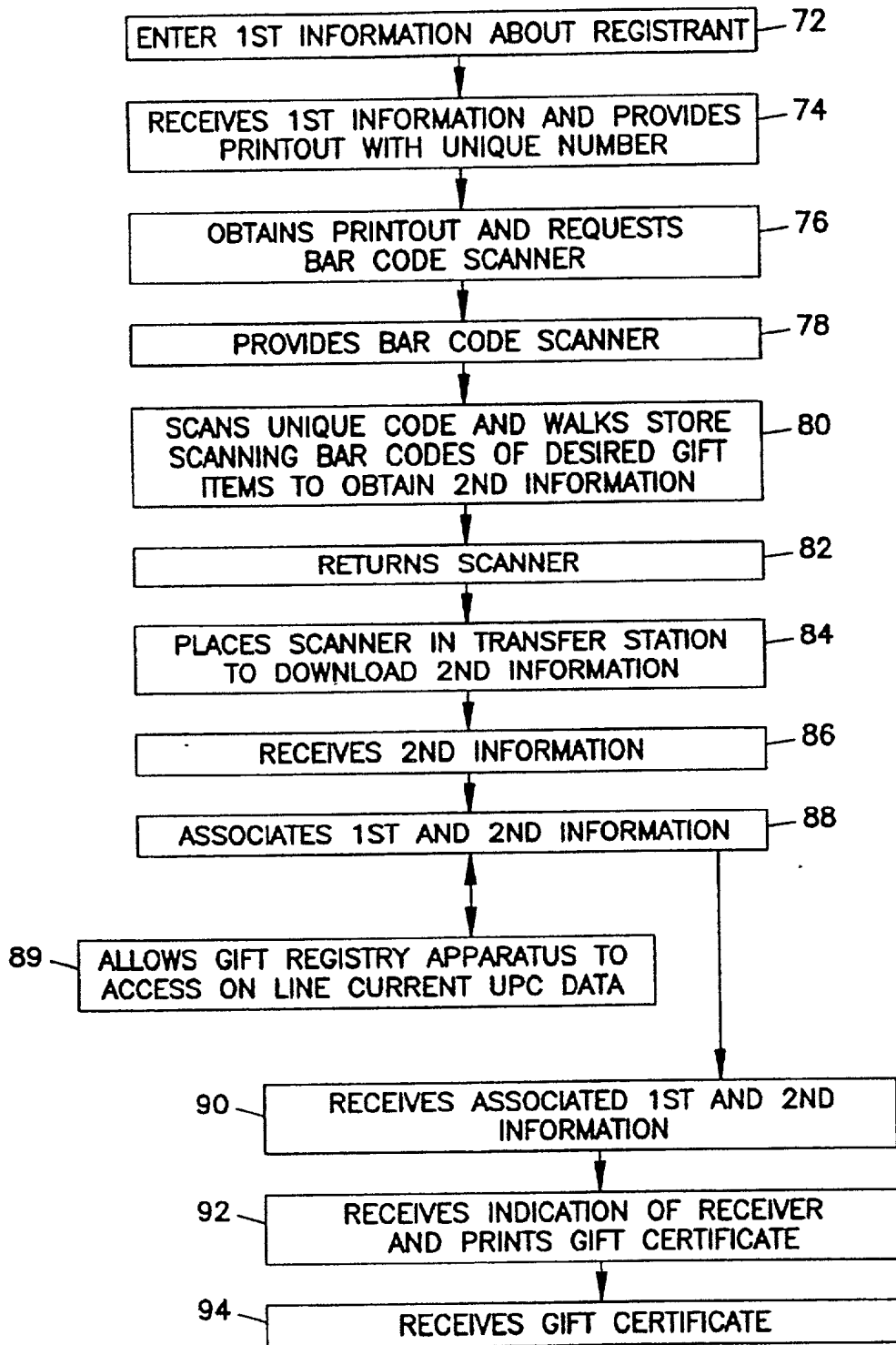


FIG. 5

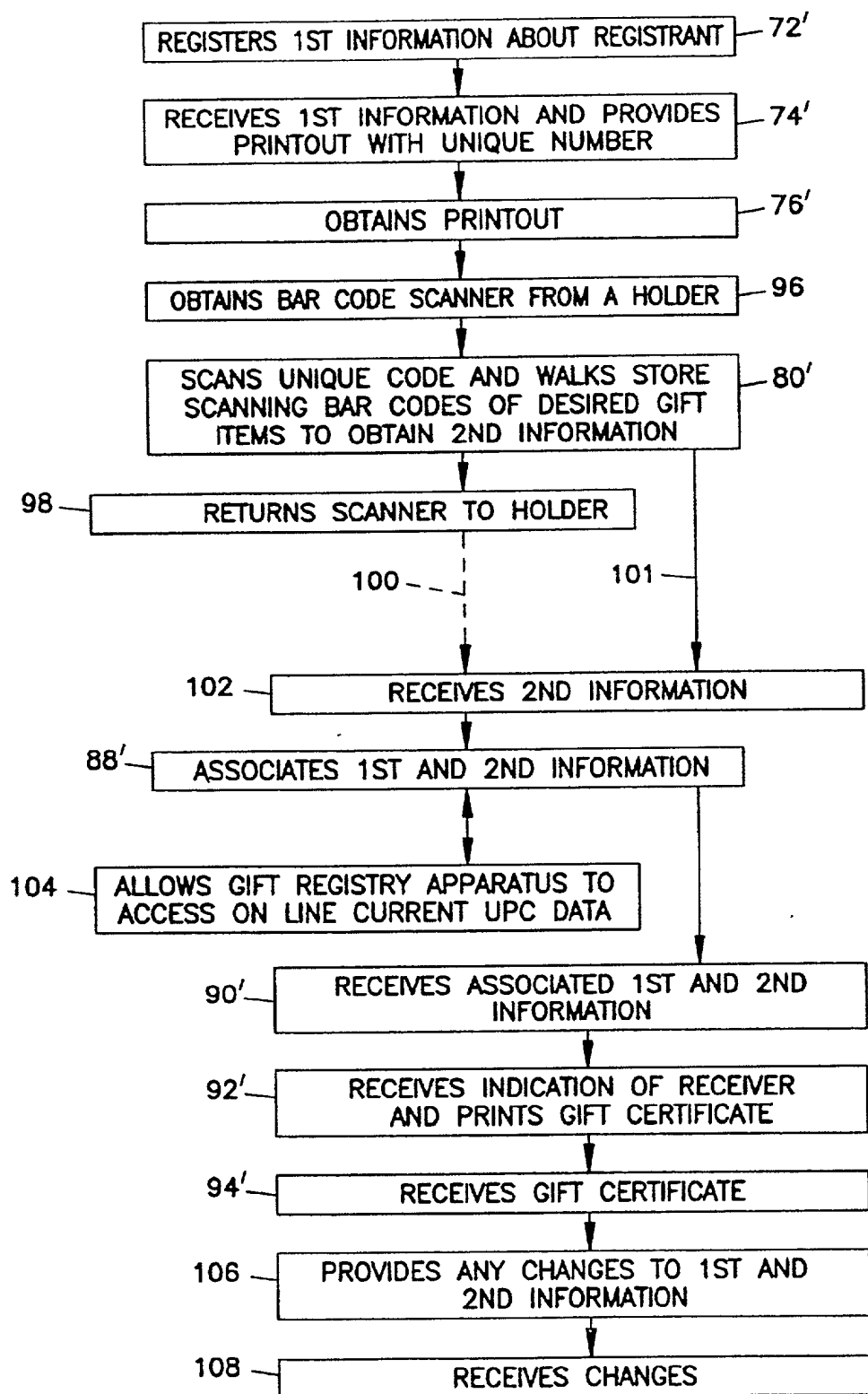


FIG. 6

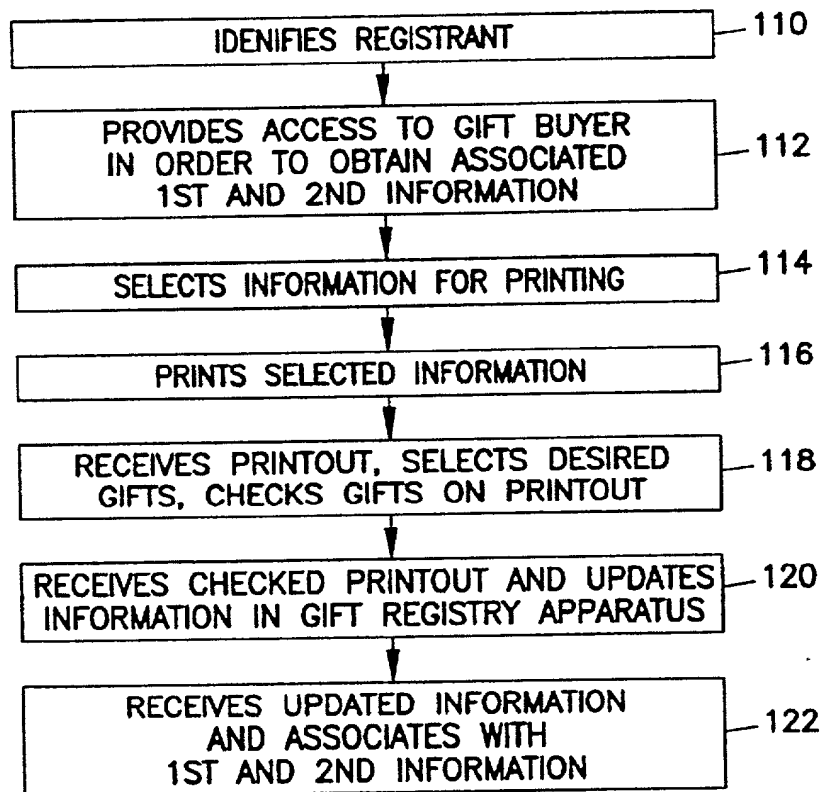


FIG. 7

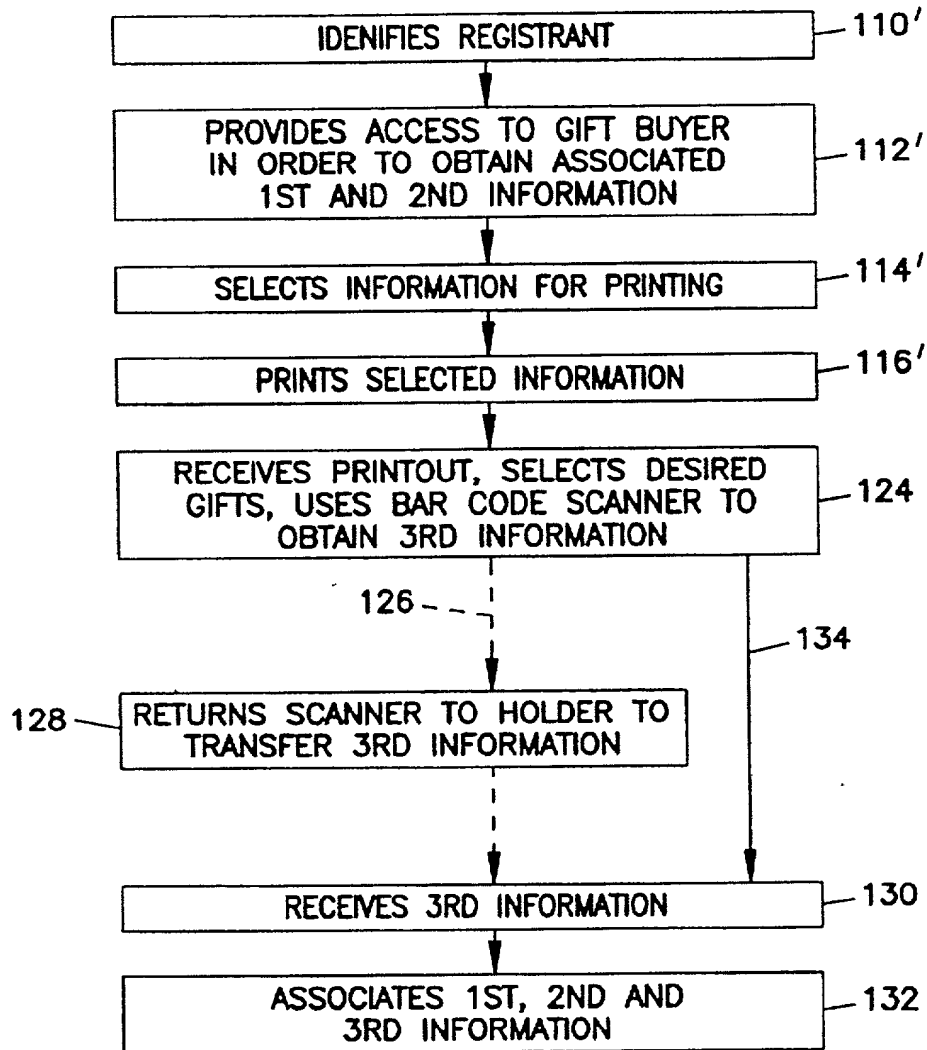


FIG. 8

REGISTRANT No.
1234567890
|||||

LAURA J. SMITH
P. WILLIAM GEROM
WEDDING JUNE 12, 1993

<u>WANTED</u>	<u>REC'D</u>	<u>ITEM No.</u>	<u>CHECK</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>UPC No.</u>
2	1	18	[]	TOASTER	3210987654

FIG. 9

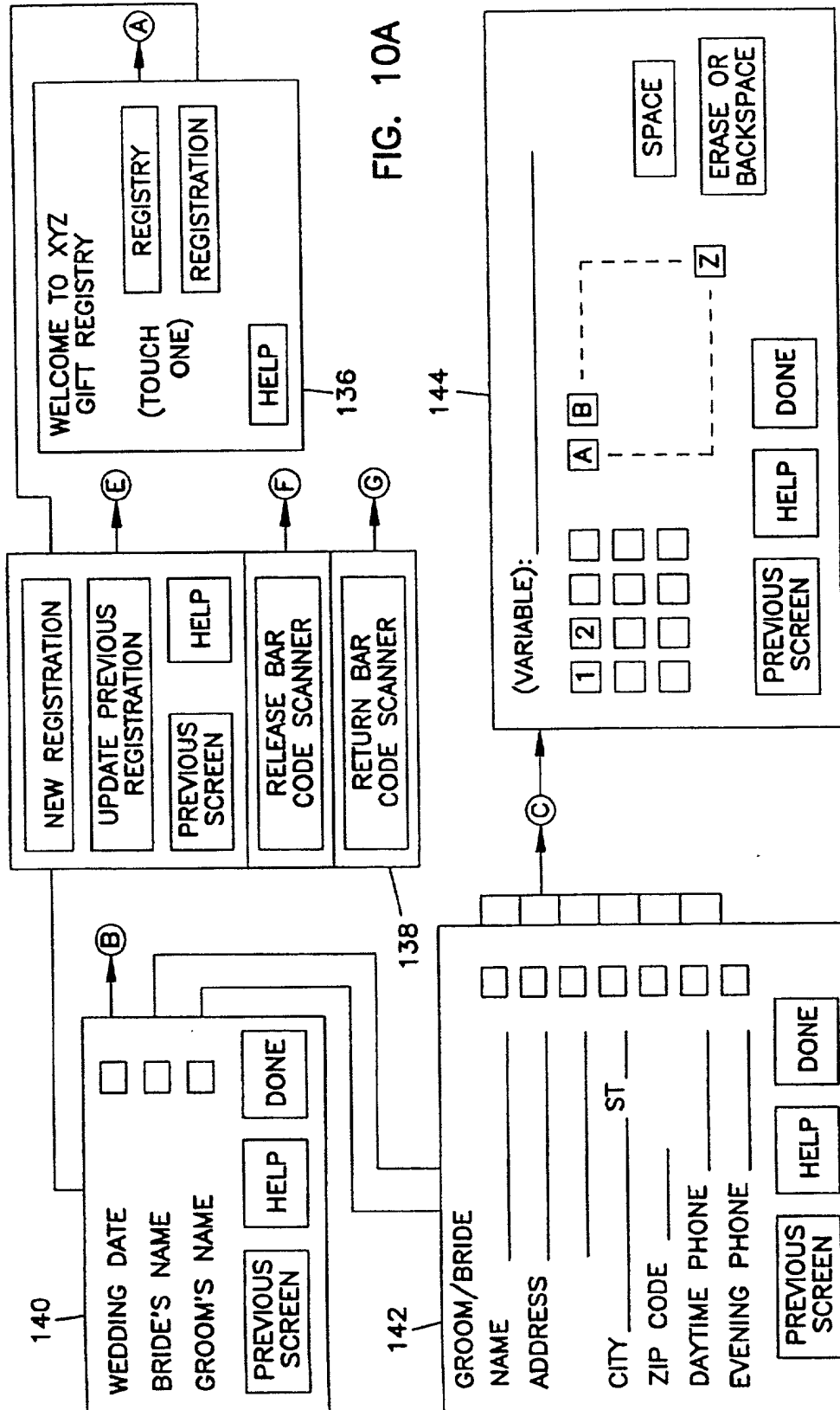
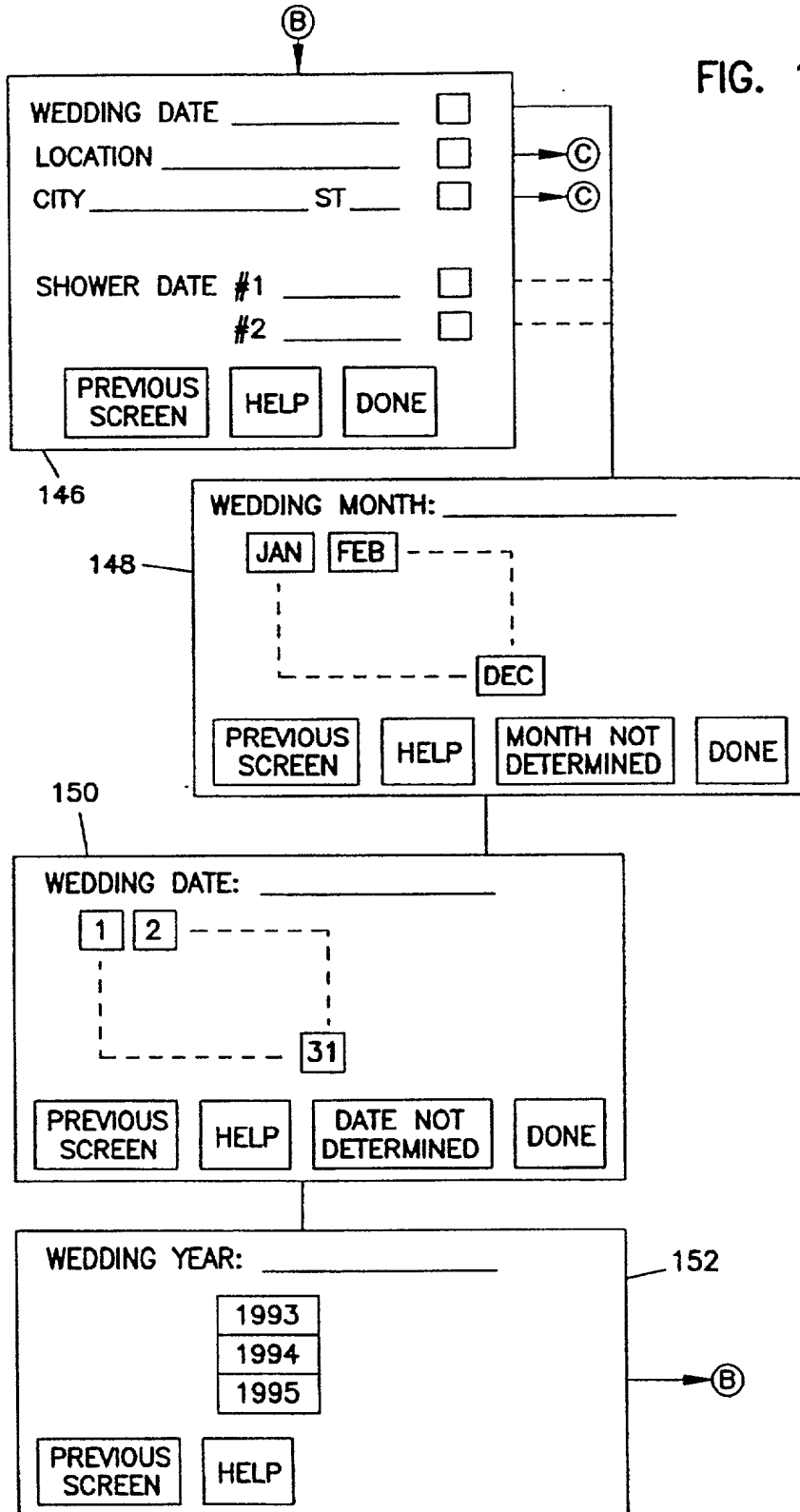


FIG. 10A

FIG. 10B



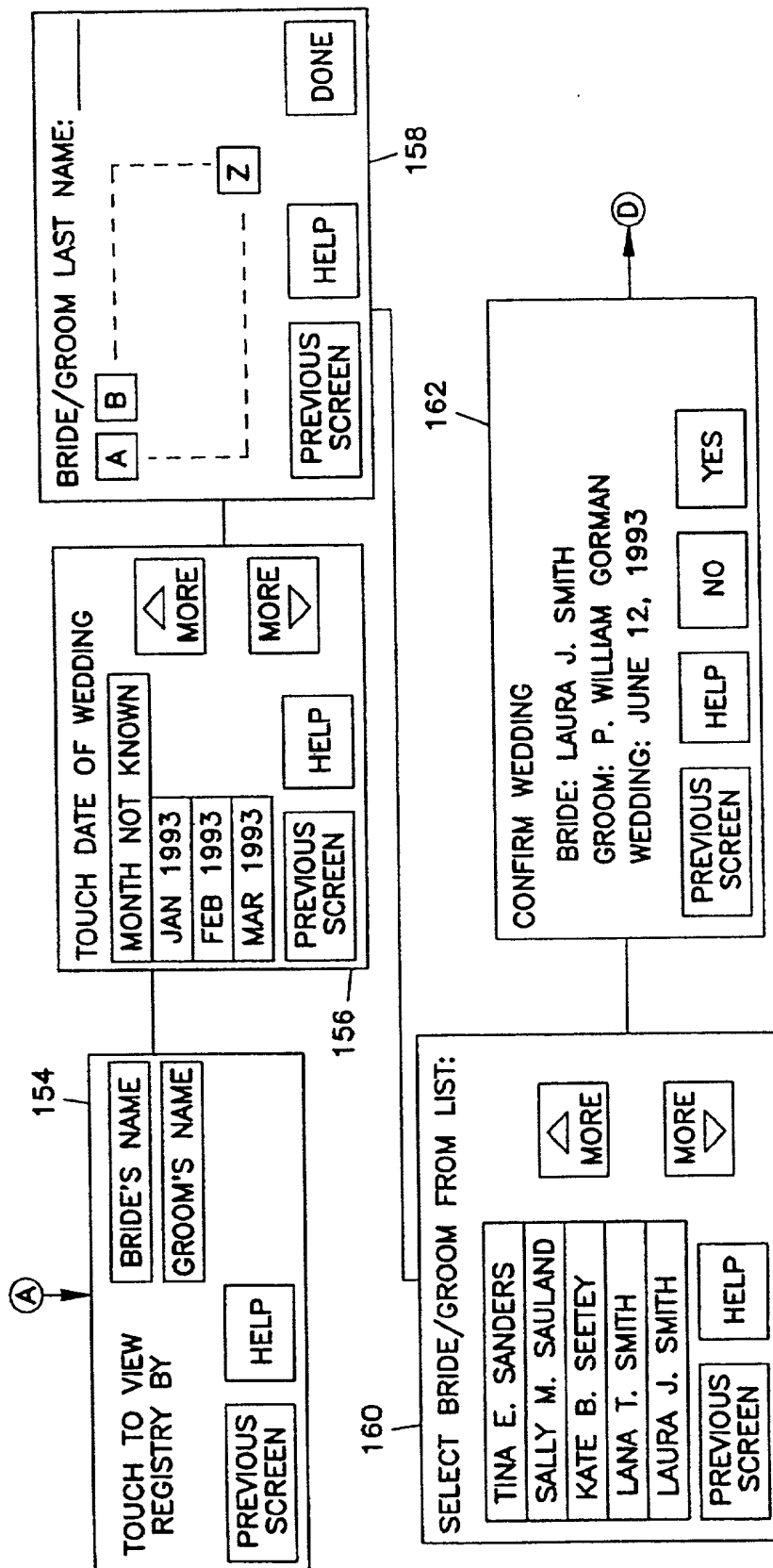


FIG. 10C

FIG. 10D

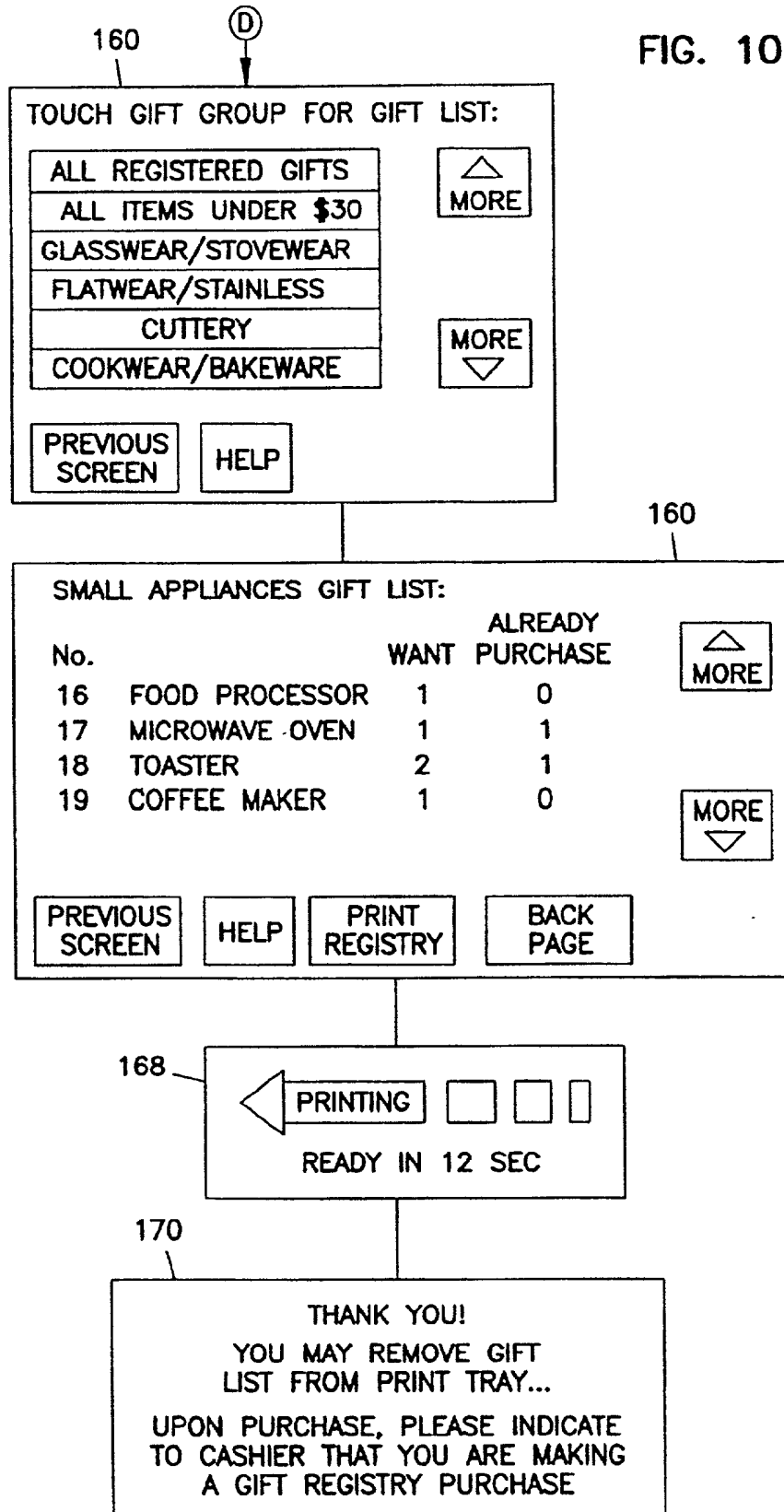
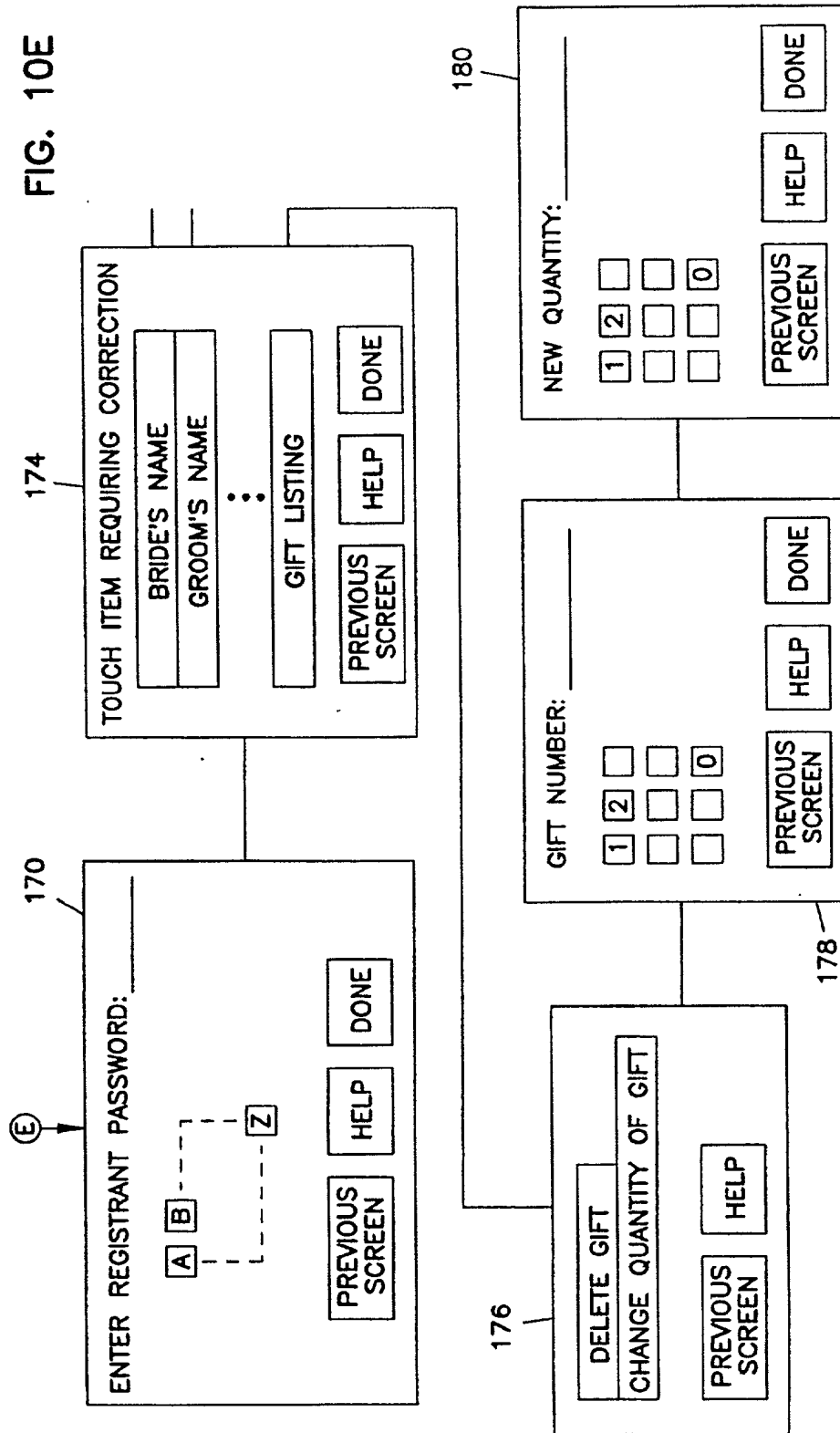


FIG. 10E



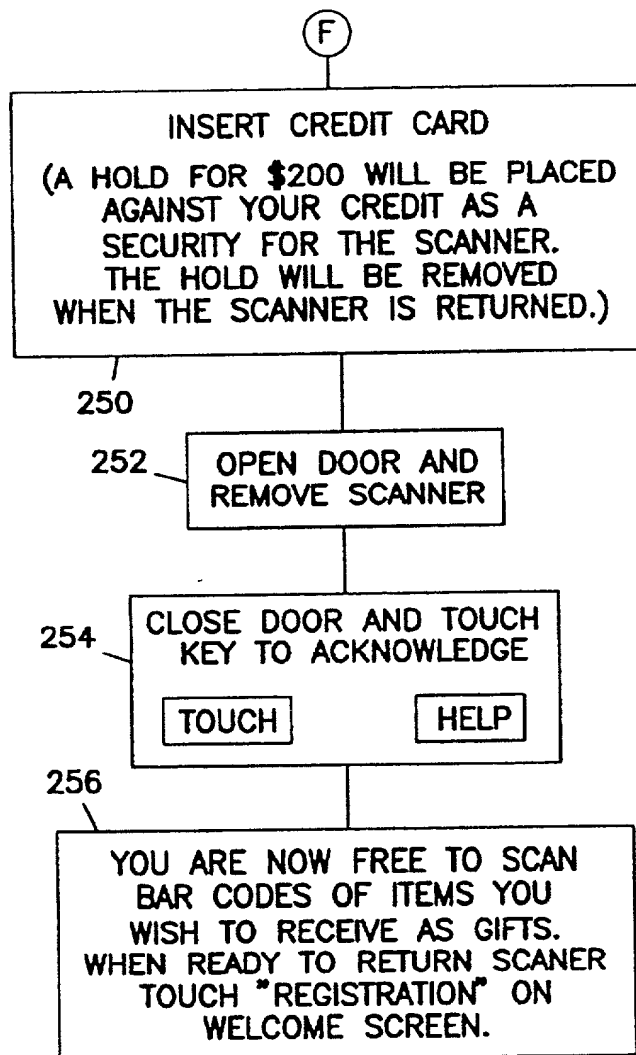


FIG. 10F

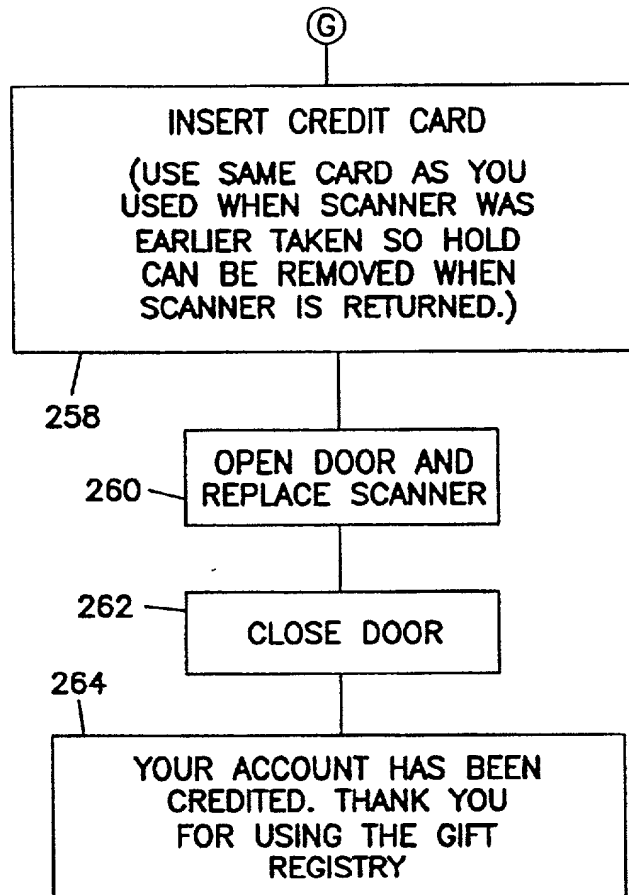


FIG. 10G

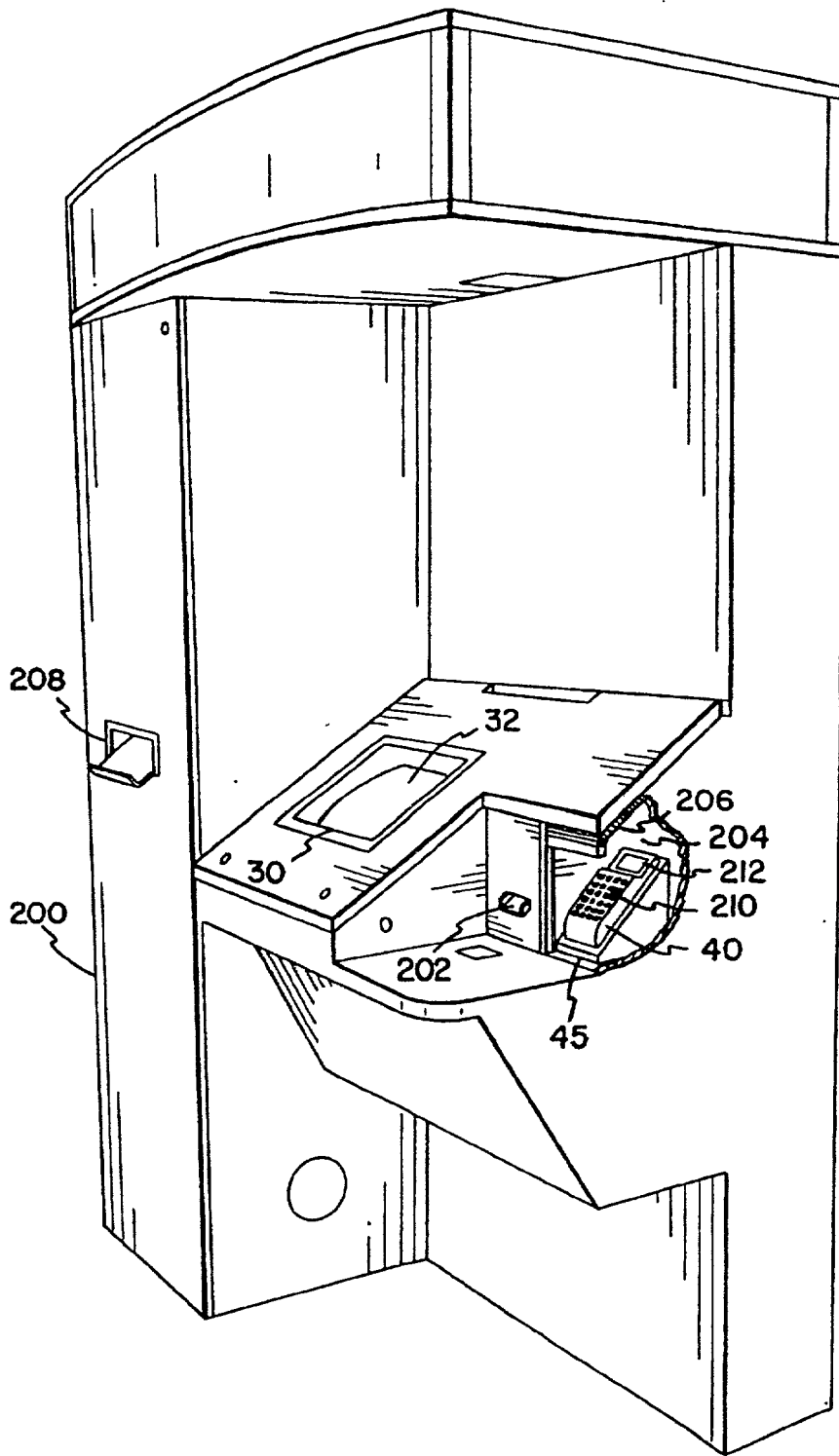


FIG. II

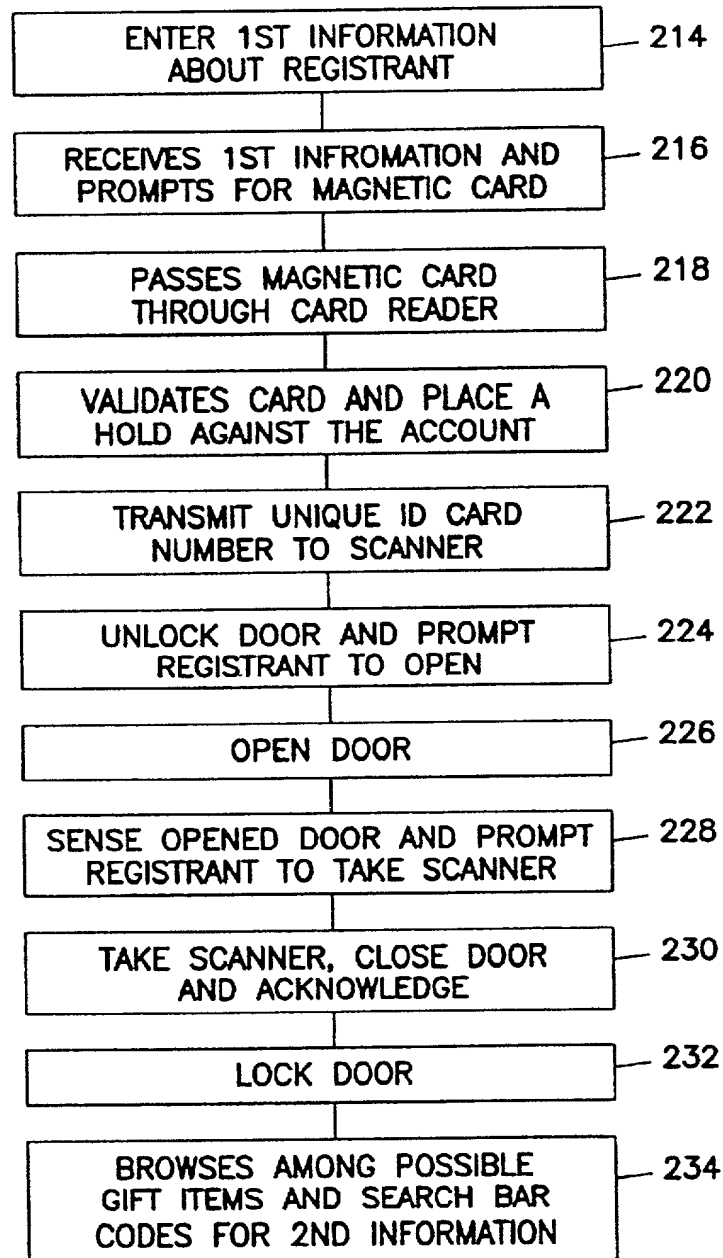


FIG. 12A

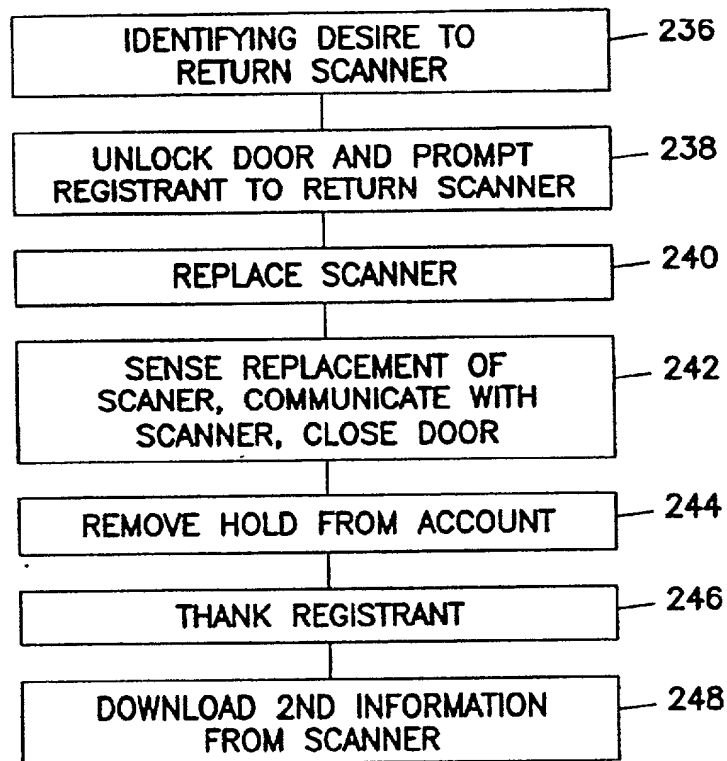


FIG. 12B

CODED SET 960

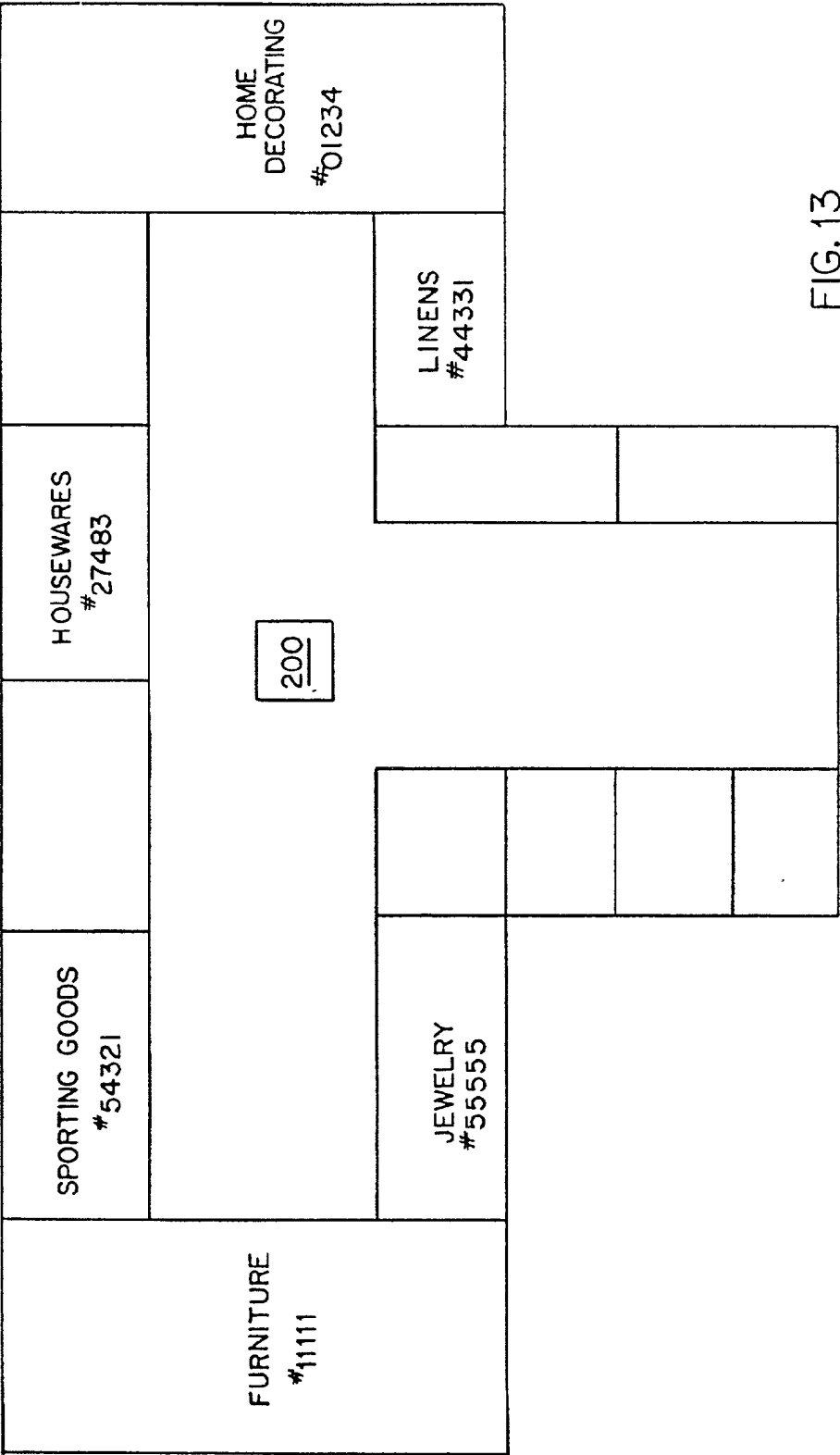
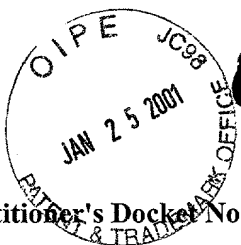


FIG. 13



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Practitioner's Docket No. 9203/046 RE

PATENT

COMBINED DECLARATION AND POWER OF ATTORNEY

(ORIGINAL, DESIGN, NATIONAL STAGE OF PCT, SUPPLEMENTAL, DIVISIONAL,
CONTINUATION, OR C-I-P)

As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

TYPE OF DECLARATION

This declaration is for a reissue application.

RECEIVED

JAN 29 2001

OFFICE OF PETITIONS

INVENTORSHIP IDENTIFICATION

My residence and citizenship are as stated below, next to my name. I believe that I am an original, first and joint inventor of the subject matter that is claimed, and for which a patent is sought on the invention entitled:

TITLE OF INVENTION

MULTI-MERCHANT GIFT REGISTRY

SPECIFICATION IDENTIFICATION

The specification was filed on November 22, 1995, as Serial No. 562,014, which issued on June 30, 1998 as patent number 5,774,874 and was filed as a reissue application on June 30, 2000, as Serial No. 09/610,158.

SUPPLEMENTAL DECLARATION (37 C.F.R. SECTION 1.67(b))

I hereby declare that the subject matter of the amendment filed on June 30, 2000 was part of my/our invention and was invented before the filing date of the original application, above identified, for such invention.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF REVIEW OF PAPERS AND DUTY OF CANDOR

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claims, as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information, which is material to patentability as defined in 37, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 1.56, and which is material to the examination of this application, namely, information where there is a substantial likelihood that a reasonable Examiner would consider it important in deciding whether to allow the application to issue as a patent.

09/610,158-093000

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

James M. Graziano
303-379-1113

SIGNATURES

(Declaration and Power of Attorney--page 2 of 2)

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